

Myriad 411

Chapter 411: Meeting Of Elders (1)

The academy had remained peaceful for a few days. Everyone was focused on either cultivating or recovering from their injuries.

But news regarding the Willpower Grotto still started spreading in the academy. When news that even the myriad race students might also be allowed to enter the grotto spread, it was as though a massive stone had been tossed into a calm lake.

...

Heart Cultivating Pavilion.

Yet another meeting was being held between the elders.

For some reason, there were a lot more meetings this year compared to the previous years. It felt as though a meeting would be held every few days. This was also the first meeting Hong Tan attended in this semester.

Meeting room.

When Hong Tan saw Zhou Mingren, he was very friendly. With a big smile on his face, he asked, "Old Zhou, I hope your injuries aren't causing much trouble for you."

Zhou Mingren ignored Hong Tan and sat down before shutting his eyes to wait for the start of the meeting.

Hong Tan mere smiled and cupped his hands at the others, "I have only been away for a few months but the academy seems to have changed completely. We now have myriad race students and even the Willpower Grotto is going to be opened. Good thing I'm back now. Any longer and I might even find myself returning to an academy with an entirely different name."

He looked at Xia Changqing and smiled, "Old Xia, maybe the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy can change its name to Changqing Cultural Research Academy. It has such a nice ring to it, right?"

Xia Changqing said nothing. He decided to ignore the angry old man.

Hong Tan did not mind. He laughed heartily, "Forget it. Sigh. Life sure is hard."

He looked at a different person and asked curiously, "Old Nie, why are you here?"

Old Nie shot Hong Tan a glance and sighed. What a pity. He had accidentally crushed the teapot. Otherwise, this would be the perfect time for him to take out the teapot in front of Hong Tan.

The other elders were similarly surprised to see Old Nie. Vice Principal Su Ziming asked, "Old Nie, what brings you here today? You don't attend these meetings often."

There were six non Mountainsea elders in the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. Apart from the head manager of the library and the hall master of the Discipline Hall, the other four were in charge of the Grotto District.

The four biggest grottos of the academy, the Source Qi Secret Grotto, the Devil Battling Field Grotto, the Willpower Grotto, and the Imprisoned Demon Grotto, were each left behind by a different deceased principal.

The Great Xia Cultural Research Academy had welcomed six principals in total. Apart from the fifth principal, who had died without leaving a grotto, and Wan Tiansheng, who was still alive, each of the previous principals had left a grotto behind before dying.

Old Nie was the leader of the guards of the Source Qi Secret Grotto and also an elder of the academy.

Zhao Li was supposed to be the one in this position, but back then, he was only focused on weaponsmithing. And after failing his attempt to forge an earth-grade weapon, he was no longer in the mood to manage the grotto.

Hearing Su Ziming's words, Old Nie smiled, "Vice Principal Su, I heard that each of the elders attending this meeting will get a slot. That's why I'm here."

The moment those words were said, Yu Hong said, "Nonsense. I don't know who has been spreading these rumors, but that is nonsense."

Some rumors had indeed been spreading in the academy during the past few days.

First, people were saying that the myriad race students would be allowed to enter the grotto. Next, they were saying that each elder could get a slot. Then, people started saying that all the top 100 students could enter. Some people were also saying that only the myriad race students would be allowed to enter.

These rumors had caused a lot of trouble for the single character faction. Nothing seemed to be going well for them recently. In fact, they had never stopped encountering trouble since the start of the semester.

Elder Sun said, "This is a grotto we are paying a great price to open. If anyone else wishes to enter, they can pay for it as well."

These people were actually trying to reap the rewards of their hard work. This was not something they could accept!

Not more than 50 people could enter the grotto. And there were already plenty of people in the single character faction waiting to enter. But before they had even opened the grotto, a large group of sharks was already waiting to take a bite out of them.

Even Nie Qi, someone who rarely got involved in academy affairs, was here today. And Old Nie was not the only inactive elder that had appeared today. Before long, a few more elders arrived. All of them were in the Cloudbreach Realm.

The Cloudbreach elders who had rarely participated in academy affairs had all arrived. Even a few of the elders that were supposed to be in seclusion were here.

"Jia Wendao, I thought you're in seclusion? Why are you here?"

An elder greeted Jia Wendao, a fatty with an oily face. He looked more like someone who had just left a feast instead of a secluded cultivation session.

Jia Wendao laughed heartily, "I heard we're getting free slots today so I left seclusion. Old Hong, you're back?"

Looking at Hong Tan, Jia Wendao grinned and said, "Old Hong, not long ago, I collected a set of writing tools. The set consists of a dragon-beard brush, profound turtle inkstone, and so on. In fact, that set reminds me of the set you used to have. I have been wanting to have something similar for a while now. Imagine my surprise when I found something similar being sold."

"..."

Hong Tan's face turned stiff. Yeah! Where were his writing tools? Why had he not seen them since his return? Also, where was his teapot? Where were his beloved paintings? Where was his lovely dragon-phoenix jade sculpture?

Damn it! A lot of things seemed to be missing from his room! He had been too busy for the past few days and had forgotten to ask about them.

Jia Wendao continued laughing happily. The other elders were resisting the urge to laugh as well.

Yu Hong did not bother hiding anything. He sneered and said, "Truly a lineage of unfilial disciples and immoral members. A student is actually freely selling the belongings of his teacher. This complete lack of respect toward one's seniors is probably a result of incompetent teachers and elders."

Hong Tan looked at Yu Hong and smiled, "Elder Yu, why beat around the bush if you're trying to attack me with words? I enjoy living in such an environment. What can you do about it? Even if Bai Feng wishes to sell the research center, I won't object. So what?"

He could already guess what Bai Feng had done. He cursed inwardly and decided to teach Bai Feng a really good lesson after this. Naturally, when he was among outsiders, he would have to uphold his reputation.

"In the past, I had merely been too lazy to deal with you guys. Don't think that I'm a pushover just because of that." Hong Tan smiled, "Yes, I don't really get involved in the affairs of the academy that much. However...when someone tries to step all over me...well, you guys need to understand that someone near the Sunmoon Realm is not someone you can afford to provoke. Old hag, use your brain and think about my words after this. I am not interested in waging a war of words with an old hag like you. If you keep running your mouth in front of me, you'll need to consider whether Old Zhou can really protect you from me."

Zhou Mingren frowned slightly and waved his hand, stopping Yu Hong from saying anything else. Yu Hong was only a seventh-stage Mountainsea. She was not weak, but she was far from Hong Tan's match. Of the eight elders in the single character faction, he was the strongest. As for the second strongest elder, it was none other than Elder Zhao who was in a sealed seclusion.

Zheng Yuming was the weakest, followed by Elder Li, a fourth-stage Mountainsea. Above Elder Li was Elder Ma, a fifth-stage Mountainsea who was still stationed at the Allheaven Battlefield. They also had an Elder Fang who was a sixth-stage Mountainsea and Elder Sun who was a seventh-stage Mountainsea.

Apart from Zheng Yuming, the rest of the elders were all powerful individuals. This was also one of the reasons why the single character faction held so much power in Great Xia. They had four late-stage Mountainseas in their ranks.

Hong Tan said nothing else and sat down. Before long, Wu Yuehua and a few other elders arrived. People like He Ji and Fan Jin had arrived with her. The others from the group said nothing. As for Wu Yuehua, she merely shot Su Ziming a glance before sneered with contempt.

Su Ziming remained silent. Back then, he was also a supporter of the multiple character faction. Fifty years later, he had opted to be absent from the major battle between the single and multiple character factions.

After all the elders were gathered, Wan Tiansheng leisurely walked through the door. With a cup of tea in hand, he sat down and started sipping on it.

Seeing that everyone was looking at him, Wan Tiansheng smiled, "Since everyone is here, let's make this short. It's only a Willpower Grotto. It is unrelated to most of us. Why is everyone making a big deal out of it? When Old Zhou proposed to open the grotto previously, I had given my agreement."

Zhou Mingren said, "I agree that there isn't even a need to call for this meeting. It's very simple. Anyone capable of opening the grotto can do it as well. We won't stop anyone. Since we are paying ourselves to open the grotto, what is the point of calling for a meeting about it? It's only a grotto. You're making too big of a deal out of it. There is no need to gather over a dozen elders to talk about this."

"Yeah!" Wan Tiansheng nodded, "Everyone here is a busy person. Don't waste more time and voice any objections you guys have."

An old man smiled and said, "I have nothing much to say. I believe everyone here knows who my student is. He is Zhan Hai, someone on the verge of reaching the Skysoar Realm, and occupies the first place in the top 100. He deserves a slot, right? Old Zhou, I'm willing to pay 2,000 merit points for it."

Zhou Mingren frowned. He looked at the old man and nodded, "Sure."

There was no need to offend this person. This person was not weak. And Zhan Hai wasn't a member of the multiple character faction. He was more of a neutral individual. It wasn't an issue to give Zhan Hai a slot.

"My grandstudent, Jiang Mu..."

Yet another elder opened his mouth.

Zhou Mingren frowned and raised his hand, "There are a lot of students under all of you. And there are also a lot of students in our faction. There are tens of thousands of students in the academy. It is impossible to allow all of them to enter. Everyone, you are free to open the grotto yourself if you want. As for this opening, we can only offer three slots."

A lot of elders frowned after hearing that.

Wu Yuehua coldly said, "Five of the slots are mine."

"Not anymore." Zhou Mingren calmly said, "Wu Yuehua, you should understand the meaning behind the slots I promised you before. And you are aware of what you did after that. In that case, why should we still give you those slots?"

Why would he help his enemies when the hostility between them had escalated to such a level? He was no fool.

Zhou Mingren looked at a few specific elders and ignored the weaker elders. He spoke directly to the late-stage Mountainsea elders, "The slots I promised Wu Yuehua can also be given out. In total, eight slots will be given out."

The moment those words were said, the elders who had been preparing to speak out against the injustice looked at each other and decided to shut their mouths.

Only 24 elders were present at the meeting. Excluding those from the single character faction and those allied with Wu Yuehua, there weren't a lot of elders left. Thus, eight slots would be sufficient for the rest of them.

Wu Yuehua had a cold expression. She knew that there was probably nothing she could do about this.

Unwilling to give up, she said, "In that case, I'll object to the opening of this grotto. This grotto was left behind by the first principal. It belongs to the multiple character faction. The first principal was the teacher of the third principal and the fifth principal was the student of the third principal. Thus, you guys are not entitled to make any decisions regarding this grotto."

Zhou Mingren calmly said, "The first principal left the grotto to the academy, not the individuals in it. Unless a successor related by blood can be found, the grotto will only belong to the academy."

"That is not the only grotto in the academy. A decent number of them were left behind by the predecessors of the single character faction as well, including the Source Qi Secret Grotto left behind by the fourth principal and the Imprisoned Demon Grotto left behind by the second principal of the beast taming faction. Following your logic, is everyone forbidden to open these grottos as well?"

Wu Yuehua was rendered completely speechless.

At this time, Hong Tan smiled, "True. Old Zhou is right."

Wu Yuehua glared at him.

Hong Tan ignored her. He was already used to her temper. He smiled and said, "Old Zhou is relying on his own ability to open the grotto. It would be a waste to let the Willpower Grotto remain shut. It is a good idea to open it and increase the strength of our students. I approve of this."

Zhou Mingren said nothing. He knew that Hong Tan would not be saying all that to support him.

"However..." Hong Tan sighed, "Old Zhou must have forgotten about this. I am actually the deputy faculty head of the Character Faculty. The resources Old Zhou is planning to use for the opening actually belong to the faculty, right?"

"I am not normally the type of person to care about things like this. The resources allocated to us from the Knowledge Seeking Realm and the prefectural government are meant to help strengthen the academy and the students. This really has nothing much to do with me."

"Increasing the strength of our students will benefit both the academy and Great Xia. I have not helped much in running the faculty, so I am not interested in profiting off the hard labor of others."

"Nevertheless, I am still the deputy faculty head. And all those resources belong to the faculty, right? Old Zhou, I believe we need to think carefully about this before touching the faculty's treasury. I think I should get involved in the discussion regarding the opening of the grotto."

Zhou Mingren said nothing. Yu Hong was the one who frowned and said, "Those resources had all been obtained through the hard work of the students from our single character faction! It has nothing to do with you."

Hong Tan yawned and said, "You're right. But...I'm also a member of the single character faction! The multiple character faction has been officially deregistered from the academy. It no longer exists. Now, the entire Character Faculty is the single character faction. Are you not aware of this? Have you forgotten, Elder Yu? Sigh. I suppose you're really getting old if your memory is this bad."

"..."

All the other elders blanked out.

Zhou Mingren gave Hong Tan a deep gaze.

Hong Tan smiled and shrugged helplessly, "It's not like I want this to happen. I want to preserve the multiple character faction as well. With the multiple character faction around, you guys can keep using the excuse that we're not from the same faction. But now...well, I have no choice, right? The multiple character faction no longer exists. What faction would I be in if not the single character faction? How about this? You guys help me reinstate the multiple character faction and give me a few genius students. That way, we will no longer be in the same faction."

Hong Tan smiled, "According to the academy rules, each faction needs to spend over 10,000 merit points per year on their students. Free willpower texts and sufficient qualified teachers will also be provided by the faction to their members. And all these are funded by the faculty treasury."

Hong Tan said, "Thus, we have two options. I can veto everything with my position as the deputy faculty head and a member of the single character faction. As for the second option, we can reinstate the multiple character faction and give them their share of the resources."

Hong Tan looked at the single character faction elders and smiled, "What is your choice?"

They looked at him coldly. Damn these rules! Did the members of the multiple character faction have too much time in their hands? Why did it feel like reading the rules was the only thing they have been doing?

Hong Tan was actually right. Those were the only two options available to them. Reinstating the multiple character faction? What a joke!

Why had they deregistered the multiple character faction? To suppress them. As long as they existed, they would continue getting a share of the faculty's resources, such as research centers, data rooms, pills, talismans, weapons, and so on.

All those resources had never crossed Su Yu's mind. That was because he had never received any of them. But in truth, he was entitled to get a share as well. As a new student, he was eligible for some benefits from the academy after entering the Mental Tempering Stage. Every single student was entitled to these benefits.

Without these benefits, the ordinary students would not be able to survive in the academy.

How would they be able to afford to own cultural weapons?

How would they be able to afford pills and talismans?

All these things were supposed to be allocated to them. But the premise for that was for the students to be a part of a faction. Since the multiple character faction no longer existed, Su Yu could actually ask for all these resources as a member of the single character faction if he was willing to be shameless.

That was what Hong Tan was doing.

He had a wide smile on his face. With the multiple character faction being deregistered, they were no longer receiving any support from the academy, the prefecture, and the Knowledge Seeking Realm. Thus, they had actually been supporting themselves after their faction was deregistered.

Hong Tan thought that he might as well become an elder of the single character faction.

Wan Tiansheng merely looked on silently with a smile.

Xia Changqing remained silent as well. Not far away, Su Ziming's eyes were still shut.

Zhou Mingren gave Hong Tan a deep look and said, "How many slots do you want?"

"Twenty."

"Hmph!"

The elders snorted. In his dreams!

Chapter 412: Meeting Of Elders (2)

Zhou Mingren sank into silence. After a short while, he said, "Three slots. That's our limit. Also, Su Yu won't be allowed to enter."

Hong Tan coldly asked, "Why?"

That was not enough. After all, he would need to share his slots with those who had helped him, like Wu Yuehua and the others. After all, they might not be able to get any slots from this meeting. As for Su Yu, he was someone Hong Tan had been planning to send into the grotto.

Zhou Mingren said, "Su Yu has disrespected his teachers repeatedly. Since you are claiming to be an elder of the single character faction, the Character Faculty is no longer split into two factions. In that case, we are Su Yu's teachers as well. Shouldn't he be punished for disrespecting his teachers?"

Hong Tan frowned, "How had he disrespected you guys? He's only a student. What could he have done? Scolding you in front of your face? Defecating on your face?"

Zhou Mingren said, "With my power as the faculty head, I am forbidding his entry. Is this reason good enough? If you disagree, we will have to put this aside for now and discuss it again at a later time."

Hong Tan frowned. If he insisted on stopping Zhou Mingren from opening the grotto, he would offend even those outside the single character faction. The elders that would have been given some slots would be unhappy.

But for them to ban Su Yu from entering...

Hong Tan's expression changed repeatedly as he contemplated. Suddenly, Zhou Mingren recalled something and smiled, "Don't say that I'm not giving him a chance. And don't say that I'm not giving the other students any chances. I will take out three additional slots and organize a tournament in the academy. The top three in that tournament will be able to get these slots."

"Since Su Yu is so confident in himself, he can just join the tournament for a slot."

Zhou Mingren did not want to push Hong Tan so much that he would veto their decision to open the grotto. Thus, he left a door open for them.

The question was, would they be able to grab this chance?

This was Liu Hong's suggestion, and it was feasible.

If they really gave Su Yu zero chances, Hong Tan might really go crazy.

"Tournament?" Wan Tiansheng grew excited, "Old Zhou, this is a good idea. How about this? The academy will also sponsor the organizers with 10,000 merit points for two additional slots. Make it five slots. We will also be providing the tournament with some other rewards. This is great. It has been a while since such a tournament was last held at the academy. The top 100 is only open to those below 30. If I'm not understanding you wrongly, do you intend to open this tournament to the older students as well?"

"That's right."

Zhou Mingren nodded. Exactly.

Wan Tiansheng smiled, "Then increase the slots to five. You will get a sponsorship of 10,000 merit points from the academy. Is this agreeable?"

Zhou Mingren frowned. After a while, he nodded, "Yes."

"Good."

With that, a total of sixteen slots had been given out. Five were given to the tournament, three were given to Hong Tan, and eight were given to the other elders.

Zhou Mingren was not willing to compromise more than this. Thus, he said, "This is it. The remaining 34 slots will be ours. If you agree, we will proceed. If not, forget it. We won't open the grotto anymore. "

Wan Tiansheng smiled, "Old Hong, why don't we go with this? Su Yu isn't weak. And I'm supportive of the idea that a student should work for his own slot. Just take the three slots given to you. If we keep arguing until we end up not opening the grotto, it would be a loss for the academy. The students also won't be happy if they know about this. There is no need to invite the hostility of the entire academy. That won't be a good idea."

Hong Tan frowned for a long while before saying, "Sure. But three slots are really too little. I want five slots! Su Yu is excluded."

Wu Yuehua, Fan Jin, He Ji, and Chen Ji were the supporters of the multiple character faction. And they had participated in the previous battle as well. Clearly, they wouldn't be given any slots. Hong Tan needed to at least get each of them a slot and keep one for Wu Jia.

Otherwise, he would be too ashamed to face them.

His intention was clear for all to see. Zhou Mingren was about to refuse when Wu Yuehua coldly said, "Forget it. Just take three slots. From now on, the Pillmaking Faculty will no longer provide any pills to the other faculties."

"The same goes for the Talisman Faculty."

"Count the Beast Taming Faculty in."

"..."

He Ji smiled, "Since you're unwilling to give us any slots, forget it. We don't want it anymore. It's not like we won't be able to cultivate anymore without that grotto. Your Character Faculty can forget about using our tamed beasts in the future. And you can stop using pills and talismans as well. I'll contact the Weaponsmithing Faculty after this as well. You guys are too incredible to need the help of any external tools. You can solve everything with your characters."

Zhou Mingren smiled, "He Ji, if you want the slots, sure. I can allocate two more slots to you guys for 5,000 merit points each. Don't forget that we also need to pay when using your pills, talismans, and beasts."

Hong Tan agreed immediately, "Agreed. Ten thousand merit points for two additional slots."

Wu Yuehua was about to start raging when Hong Tan shook his head at her. This was probably the best deal they could get. If they had to pay, so be it.

As for the fact that he had no money, it didn't matter. Wu Yuehua was rich. He could borrow some money from her and pay her back when he had money.

Wan Tiansheng smiled, "Good. With this, nobody here is leaving empty handed. By the way, there is no need to give the Foreign Students Faculty any slots. But they can be allowed to join the tournament. We can't be too intolerant. We can also use them to test the strength of our students."

Nobody had any objections to that. Zhou Mingren agreed as well. He was already trying to think of a way to send the myriad race students after Su Yu. Thus, this was the perfect suggestion for him..

Wan Tiansheng smiled and said, "By the way, Zheng Yuming and Bai Feng will be going to the Vanguard Regiment at the Allheaven Battlefield next month. Zheng Yuming can return after killing a Mountainsea enemy. Bai Feng can return after killing ten Cloudbreach enemies. Regardless of the conflict, everyone needs to take responsibility for their actions. Since Bai Feng's kill was performed outside the academy, I won't say anything about it. I can't be bothered to get involved with a warzone set up by the Xia Family. But if I find someone dead within the academy itself, the punishment would be severe."

Nobody said anything.

Wan Tiansheng stood up, preparing to leave.

Right that moment, Old Nie smiled and said, "Wait a moment, Principal."

"Oh, you have something to say as well?"

When Wan Tiansheng sat back down, Old Nie said, "Everyone knows Zhao Ming, right? A few days ago, he looked for me. He said that he had been suppressed. According to him, the Discipline Hall had interfered in his duties and obstructed him from upholding justice and fairness in the academy."

Old Nie paused to look at the Discipline Hall's master and said, "Old He, the grotto guardians, the House of Hundred, the Discipline Hall, and the academy guards are not supposed to participate in any internal conflicts. The Discipline Hall exists to maintain the standards of behavior within the academy. But a discipline master had actually removed Zhao Ming from his position as a referee. He even had Liu Hong act as a temporary referee. That is inappropriate."

Old Nie looked at Old He, the hall master of the Discipline Hall and said, "Old He, you are getting old. I reckon you no longer have the energy to run the Discipline Hall any longer. After all, you have even forgotten the vow we made to each other back then. It's time for you to retire from your position."

Old He remained silent.

Xia Changqing had been silent throughout the meeting. At this time, he frowned and said, "I already punished Xia Yuwen..."

Even now, Xia Yuwen had yet to recover from his injuries. Xia Changqing had only been able to get Xia Yuwen into the Discipline Hall after pulling a lot of strings.

But before he could finish his words, Old Nie said, "Vice Principal Xia, this matter is unrelated to you. The Discipline Hall and the grotto guardians are not under your jurisdiction. Old He, retire. Enjoy your retirement peacefully. You can spend your time gardening or with some other hobbies. We have agreed to let Old Huang replace you. Let go of the position. Old Huang has been with us for so many years. It's about time we let him enjoy the treatment of an elder as well."

They had agreed. This "they" here naturally excluded everyone in the room. The other elders had an odd look in their eyes, but none said anything.

The grotto guardians and the academy guards were not the forces under the jurisdiction of these elders. Instead, these forces were under the direct control of the principal. But most of the time, the principal would allow them to handle their affairs independently. In truth, these people were basically a faction formed by the students and descendents of the former principals. They were the neutral faction of the academy.

They were the true arbiters of justice in the academy, in charge of maintaining fairness within the academy.

Even when they had personal bias toward some people, they would not do anything unfair. Su Yu was the greatest example of this. Both Old Huang and Old Nie greatly appreciated Su Yu's talent, but none had broken any rules to give him an unfair advantage.

As for the special token in Su Yu's hands, that was the unique right of Zhao Li as the son of the fourth principal. That was not a right they could interfere with.

An old man finally sighed and nodded, "I understand. Old Nie, tell Old Huang to see me for the takeover later. I have indeed been getting too old."

"Sure!" Old Nie smiled and looked at Wan Tiansheng before asking, "Principal, what do you think? Old Huang is not weak. And he is also a veteran ninth-stage Cloudbreach..."

Wan Tiansheng smiled, "Sure. If nobody objects, I'll be reporting this change of personnel to the Knowledge Seeking Realm and Talent Fostering Bureau."

"Alright. I have nothing else to say." Old Nie looked at Xia Changqing and added, "Vice Principal Xia, we don't care about what Xia Yuwen is trying to fight for. His business has nothing to do with us. We only care about the academy rules. The Discipline Hall is not something you can touch. When you become the seventh principal, we will naturally follow your lead. Prior to that, please stop interfering in our affairs."

Xia Changqing frowned and said, "That wasn't my intention."

"I know. And I understand." Old Nie smiled, "I'm only giving you a reminder that people like us are around to maintain the stability of the academy. Ultimately, all we do are done for in service of the Xia Family. It would do the Xia Family good to not ruin their own foundations. If you guys are allowed to use us for your internal power struggles, will we be able to maintain our position of absolute fairness? What if a different Xia Family member comes to us for help the next time Great Xia needs a new prefect? What are we supposed to do?"

"Vice Principal Xia, the struggle for the position of prefect should be done in an honorable manner. Nobody will get in your way. If Xia Yuwen is really capable of getting this position, he will naturally receive our support upon becoming the prefect. This includes the Devil Subduing Army and Martial Dragon Guards. All these forces exist to serve the Xia Family. Corrupting them right now will only weaken the foundations of the Xia Family and bring chaos to Great Xia. Don't forget that the current prefect and the Great Xia King are still around."

After saying all that, Old Nie stood up and left.

After Old Nie left, Hong Tan laughed and said, "Old Nie's temper is as bad as ever. But he's right. Vice Principal Xia, it isn't smart to ruin your own foundations. Xia Yuwen should focus on only carrying out his duties diligently in the Discipline Hall. What is the point in provoking these stubborn old fellows?"

He was clearly very pleased. Everyone could see that.

Xia Changqing said nothing else. He felt somewhat helpless. In fact, he was already feeling quite troubled. Even now, Xia Yuwen had yet to recover. Sure, the Xia Family did not lack the treasures to heal his injuries. But the injury to the mind was something they couldn't treat.

With the grotto guardians striking back against him, there was really nothing he could do. It would have been fine if Zhao Ming was someone easy to deal with, but Xia Yuwen just had to provoke a professional tattletale who was not afraid of anything. How would this issue be resolved so easily?

And sure enough, the hall master he had just roped in was retired.

Suddenly, Hong Tan said, "By the way, about the matter of promoting the books depository's head manager into an elder..."

Wan Tiansheng shot him a glance and said while standing up, "The grotto guardians are willing to support this if the books depository joins their faction as well. Are you sure you still want to promote Chen Yong? We can do it, but he will need to leave the multiple character faction. Do you agree?"

Hong Tan laughed awkwardly and said, "Forget about it. But let me make this clear. Since this requirement applies to Chen Yong, it better apply to the others as well."

Wan Tiansheng didn't even deign to give a reply.

Zhou Mingren had nothing to say as well. The single character faction had been trying to make Xia Yuwen the new head manager, but nobody knew just how Xia Yuwen was doing right now.

But for Xia Yuwen, the faction wouldn't matter anyway. His goal was to become the next prefect, not the next principal. As for Chen Yong, he should enter the Mountainsea Realm first before talking about his promotion. For now, his only path was to join the neutral faction for a promotion.

As the elders left one after another, Hong Tan exhaled deeply. Fortunately, things had proceeded relatively smoothly. As for Su Yu's slot, there was nothing he could do about it. He already tried his best. The kid would have to fight for it himself.

Chapter 413: Su Yu Meets Xiao'er (1)

"Tournament?"

Wentan Research Center.

Su Yu had a surprised look. Something like that was happening?

Hong Tan nodded, "Five slots. Four will be given to the others and one will be kept for your senior sister. As for you, Zhou Mingren is unwilling to give you one. When did you offend him?"

Hong Tan was quite curious. How did a student who wasn't even a Skysoar catch Zhou Mingren's attention? That man had insisted on not giving Su Yu a slot.

Instead of replying, Su Yu asked, "How about my teacher, Grandteacher?"

Was Bai Feng unable to enter as well?

"What your teacher needs right now isn't a growth of willpower. Rather, he needs to form new characters. Growing his willpower right now won't be of much help to him..."

Before Hong Tan could finish, Bai Feng grumbled, "I think it can still be very useful for me."

"..."

Hong Tan glared at his student and said, "Why do you want to go in? If you're uninjured and still have all your characters, you can definitely increase your cultivation to the ninth stage by entering. But what can you achieve in your current condition?"

"Even if I can't grow, I can still use it to nourish my willpower, right?"

Bai Feng grumbled, "Teacher, why don't you take the slot back from Elder Wu? Why does she need a slot?"

"Bullshit!" Hong Tan said, "One slot isn't even enough for her. And you're asking why? If it wasn't for our sake, would Zhou Mingren have reneged on his promise to give her some slots?"

Hong Tan had given four slots to four elders. As for whether they could get more slots through other means, that was no longer Hong Tan's business. It wasn't like there was anything he could do.

Hong Tan said, "If you hadn't acted recklessly, you would probably be able to reach the Cloudbreach Realm in two years and get the chance to enter the Luminous Domain Mansion. There, you can get some riversand back. With our own riversand, we can also open the grotto. As for entering this time, you can keep on dreaming about it."

"There's plenty of time."

Bai Feng appeared indifferent. Two years was plenty of time. He was confident he would be able to recover.

"Plenty of time?" Hong Tan was furious, "At the middle of the year after next year, the selection will be finalized. Thus, you only have around a year and a half to prepare. During the final six months, all participants will be given intensive training. After the training, they will leave for the Allheaven Battlefield. How much can you recover in only a year and a half?"

Bai Feng shrugged. How was he supposed to know? Whatever. He stopped caring.

"Xia Yuwen's injuries are as bad as mine..."

"But he has the Xia Family behind him. And his main Divine Character is still fine. Do you really think he is in the same situation as you?"

"..."

Su Yu completely ignored the two as he sank into thought.

After a while, he asked, "Grandteacher, so everyone under the Skysoar Realm in the academy is allowed to join?"

"Yeah." Hong Tan sighed, "I think you should just give up on it. There are too many of old students below the Skysoar Realm in the academy. What's so special about this grotto? It's just some willpower. I'll provide you with some pure willpower for your cultivation. The effect would be the same. The purity might even be higher!"

There was one thing he left unsaid. The amount he could provide wouldn't be too high. But as someone below the Skysoar Realm, how much willpower could Su Yu absorb?

Hong Tan said, "There is no need to make a big deal out of a single slot. After all, they are the ones paying to open the grotto. We had only taken advantage over the fact that the grotto does not belong to them to get some slots. Otherwise, nobody apart from their own people would be allowed to enter. Without any opened apertures, you won't be able to absorb much anyway. You've been in your teacher's lab before. The willpower in there is much purer. I'll get some for you later."

Bai Feng smiled, "Kid, this isn't a loss for you. In truth, you won't be able to get much benefit from the grotto anyway. Since your grandteacher is going to provide you with some purified willpower, the purity will definitely be even higher. No matter what, your grandteacher is someone near the Sunmoon Realm. This is enough for you."

He was also of the opinion that there was no need for Su Yu to join the tournament. It was obvious that the tournament wasn't a good thing for Su Yu. The single character faction would most certainly target Su Yu during the tournament. They might as well ignore them and let the ploy fail before it could even begin.

Hong Tan was already assuming that Su Yu was going to ignore the tournament. He smiled and said, "Follow me to the prefect's manor later. Let's see if we can get you the Sky Sundering Saber. Forget the tournament. Focus on cultivating. Entering the Infinite Strength Realm before reaching the Skysoar Realm should be your priority. Ignore everything else. Form more characters while you're at it. Even if you can now disassemble your character technique, forming more characters before the Skysoar Realm is still good for you."

Su Yu scratched his head and flashed an honest smile as he said, "Grandteacher, is there a lot of willpower in the Willpower Grotto? Is it endless?"

"It depends on how much resources they spend on opening it..."

"And how much willpower would you be able to produce for me?"

"..."

Hong Tan rolled his eyes. Of course he wouldn't be able to produce as much. They were too poor. He would only provide a little as a consolation for the kid for not getting to enter the grotto. It wasn't like the kid could absorb much. Why was this kid being all picky?

Su Yu said, "Grandteacher, my willpower absorption speed is quite fast. A small amount of willpower won't be enough for me."

"Fast? How fast can it be?" Hong Tan appeared indifferent.

Su Yu smiled, "For example, just that little bit of willpower in Teacher's lab would probably be gone after half an hour of absorption."

"..."

Both Hong Tan and Bai Feng stared at Su Yu silently.

After a while, Bai Feng said, "You little bastard! Did you secretly absorb some of the willpower in my lab? No wonder I felt that the willpower in the lab had decreased a little. Was that you?"

Su Yu coughed awkwardly and said, "Of course not, Teacher! I would never do something like that! You must have accidentally absorbed some yourself."

"Nonsense!"

Bai Feng cursed inwardly. Who was the kid trying to fool?

"Did you stumble upon another fortuitous encounter and get a foundation cultural art out of it?"

"..."

Su Yu stared at his teacher silently. Bai Feng also stared at Su Yu silently. With a calm expression, Bai Feng said, "Why are you looking at me like that? You have been taking heaven-grade cultivation methods and martial techniques out left and right. You have also been taking out unique cultivation methods like the Soul Devouring Art and some supposed ability blood essence from thin air. Why should I be surprised if you can take out a foundation cultural art as well?"

Did the brat think that he would be shocked by this? Dream on! Nothing could surprise him anymore! Unless this brat could suddenly advance into the Skysoar Realm in front of him right now, nothing could shock him! He would stay calm and aloof!

Meanwhile, Hong Tan was looking at both Bai Feng and Su Yu, wondering if the two had gone mad.

Su Yu found himself somewhat speechless to see Bai Feng so calm. After a while, he finally nodded, "Teacher, you are truly amazing and smart. Yes. I know a foundation cultural art."

"How many apertures?"

Bai Feng asked calmly, "Is it 9? Or 18? Or 27?"

"36 apertures." Su Yu gave a short reply.

Bai Feng cursed inwardly, but he maintained the same calm expression as he said, "Not bad. It's slightly worse than the Myriad Text Sutra, but it's not too bad at all."

Hong Tan stared at Bai Feng silently. Go on. Keep acting.

The Myriad Text Sutra could only be cultivated upon reaching the Skysoar Realm. It allowed one to open 72 apertures. What was the point of comparing it against a foundation cultural art?

Bai Feng ignored his teacher and continued asking, "How many apertures have you opened? Four? Eight? Or..."

"All 36 of them."

In truth, Su Yu had already opened 40 apertures. But it wouldn't be a good idea to tell the truth. Otherwise, he would also need to explain the origin of the extra apertures. And it would be hard for him to explain himself. Thus, 36 was the perfect number to give.

"Cough, cough, cough..."

Bai Feng suddenly started coughing madly. He felt like coughing blood. Yes, he really felt like coughing blood. He was greatly alarmed.

Holy shit!

Even he himself had only opened 32 apertures. Yes, that was why he was only an eighth-stage Skysoar. If he had 36 apertures, he would already be at the ninth-stage Skysoar Realm.

Of course, this would not apply to Su Yu due to the level of his willpower. Some of his characters had already reached the second tier, but they weren't at the peak of the second tier either. Thus, even if Su Yu could enter the Skysoar Realm now, he still wouldn't be able to reach the ninth stage.

But as long as he could increase the tier of his willpower and Divine Characters, he would instantly become a ninth-stage Skysoar. And that was why foundation cultural art was so important.

As for the Myriad Text Sutra, he could always cultivate it at a later time. After reaching the ninth-stage Skysoar Realm with 36 apertures, he would be able to easily open 36 Skysoar apertures of the Myriad Text Sutra and enter the Cloudbreach Realm with the Myriad Text Sutra as his main cultivation method.

A foundation cultural art was not enough to bring one into the Cloudbreach Realm unless the art had more than 36 apertures.

...

Hong Tan remained completely silent. He watched on with complete indifference. He was a pseudo Sunmoon! He had to stay calm and dignified. Yes. He was very calm. This was just a student with only 36 apertures. What was the big deal about that? He had opened 72 apertures! More than that, he had also fused all of them, leaving only one aperture in his sea of willpower. Amazing, right?

He was a pseudo Sunmoon!

What was Sunmoon?

Fusing apertures into one aperture that was as bright and resplendent as the sun and the moon, granting one the ability to casually pluck stars and moons out of the sky. That was a Sunmoon.

That was also the case for physical cultivators. By fusing all acupoints into a single acupoint as resplendent as the sun and the moon, one would obtain the ability to regrow one's body from a drop of blood.

This brat was just a student. It was not a big deal!

Hong Tan looked completely calm. He looked even calmer than Bai Feng. Inwardly, however, he was wondering if he should leave and come back after the two were done talking.

Chapter 414: Su Yu Meets Xiao'er (2)

While Bai Feng was suffering from a coughing fit, Su Yu stepped forward and patted his back. When Bai Feng finally stopped coughing, he looked at Su Yu with a complicated expression. He really didn't know what to feel anymore.

"Where did you get something like that?"

"I deduced it myself. You told me to deduce one myself previously, remember? You said that if I manage to deduce a cultural art, you will become my student instead—cough, cough. Of course, you were only joking. I definitely won't take those words seriously."

"You...deduced it yourself?"

Bai Feng did not know what to say anymore. Please stop messing with him.

"Thank you for the blood character, Teacher."

Bai Feng stared at his student silently. If this brat dared to make the character a scapegoat one more time, he would beat the brat to death. Even in his current injured state, he was still strong enough to beat this brat to death.

Blood character? Bullshit!

At this point, Hong Tan could no longer stay silent. He said, "You deduced it yourself?"

Did the brat take him for a fool? A kid like this could actually deduce a cultural art himself?

Su Yu gave a hollow laugh and said, "Not all by myself. Teacher helped me a lot. And some of the research materials left behind by you had been very helpful as well. Also, the water guy in the prison had been helpful. There's also Teacher Liu's teachings. Only with all these helps was I able to come up with the Water Origin Art, a cultural art suitable for humans."

"So you have 36 apertures opened?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah."

Hong Tan looked at Bai Feng, then looked at Su Yu, before looking at Bai Feng again. After a while, he sighed, "I might be getting old, but I'm in a better condition than Great Xia King since I'm still not senile yet. But I've discovered something. After my return, the two of you have been treating me like I'm a senile old man."

Unfilial students!

The two kids were definitely spouting lies to him like he was a fool. One claimed that he had easily deduced the existence of racial ability characters and a disassembly method for character techniques.

One claimed to have deduced a foundation cultural art with 36 apertures and the Soul Devouring Art that specialized in harming willpower. If these two were really telling the truth, wasn't he a piece of trash in terms of research?

After decades of research, character fusion and ability blood essence were the only notable research results he had come up with. But these two had surpassed him in a matter of months?

He shot Su Yu another look before saying with a tired voice, "Do you know how many apertures a human has in total?"

Su Yu was at a loss for words. He did not know the answer.

"Do you know the classification of apertures?"

No answer.

"Do you know about aperture fusion?"

No answer.

But Su Yu still maintained an innocent expression.

"You know nothing, yet you claim to have deduced a cultural art. Do you think your Grandteacher is a fool?"

Hong Tan had the urge to roll his eyes.

But at this moment, Su Yu had a look of realization as he said, "Oh, I understand now!"

What did the kid understand this time?

"Congratulations, Grandteacher, for coming out with the Water Origin Art, a foundation cultural art with 36 apertures. My grandteacher is truly mighty and incredible."

Su Yu congratulated his grandteacher unhesitatingly.

It was Hong Tan's turn to feel like coughing blood. This was what the brat got out of everything he had said?

Fuck!

Too tired to keep talking about the same topic, Hong Tan asked, "Who else knows about this?"

"Nobody. Wait, no. The prefect's son, Xia Huyou, has the instructions to open 35 of the 36 apertures. He's still missing one."

"Xia Longwu's son?"

"Yeah."

Bai Feng asked in astonishment, "You actually know Xia Longwu's son?"

"It's that fatty. The little fatty, Xia Huyou. You met him before, Teacher."

"That's Xia Longwu's son?"

Bai Feng, who had remained calm throughout the entire conversation, was finally shocked. That was unbelievable.

Holy shit!

Even if he started telling others about it, nobody would believe it. It might sound more believable if he said that the little fatty was Marquis Xia's son instead.

Hong Tan was getting even more tired listening to the conversation between his student and grandstudent. He berated, "Is this even the main point?"

Were these two not aware of the crux of the issue here? This kid was actually capable of coming out with a cultural art with 36 apertures. That was the crux of the issue. Yet these two were talking about Xia Longwu's son? What was so interesting about that kid?

He knew that kid as well! It was just a little fatty! He had met everyone of note from the Xia Family, including Great Xia King! Just how did the brains of these two work? Why did their brains work so differently from his?

After he cursed at the two, they finally stopped talking. Only then did Hong Tan said, "Xia Huyou, right? That little fatty really does resemble that Fatty Xia a lot. I reckon Xia Longwu must have suspected the same as well. That was why he had Fatty Xia raise the little fatty instead. Hahaha!"

"..."

Su Yu and Bai Feng exchanged gazes speechlessly. The old man was laughing very happily. Was he not afraid of being beaten to death by the Xia Family for making such jokes?

"Cough, cough, cough!"

Hong Tan hurriedly stopped and assumed a solemn expression as he said, "Hand it over to me later. Don't spread it around anymore. I'll work on it for a bit and give it a complete makeover. Water Origin

Art? What nonsense. That's not its name. Its called the Thirty-six Souls - Heaven Shaking Sutra, a result of my hard work over a period of 50 years."

Su Yu hurriedly flashed a fawning smile and said, "Exactly! You're right, Grandteacher!"

Hong Tan rolled his eyes and waved his hand, "You may leave now."

Su Yu laughed awkwardly and hurriedly left the room.

The moment he left, Hong Tan solemnly asked, "What's up with this kid?"

Bai Feng gave a short summary of Su Yu's history before saying, "He has probably stumbled on a fortuitous encounter to obtain a unique character inheritance or some sort of memory fragment inheritance. Over the years, I have peeled a lot of memory fragments during my experiments. He might have encountered a relatively complete memory fragment. That's very possible."

"Memory fragment?" Hong Tan thought about it and said, "I'll ask my senior brother about it. If that was a pure fortuitous encounter, it would be fine. I'm only afraid that there is more to that. Don't forget that we have an Invincible as an enemy."

Bai Feng said, "I wasn't even aware of that before this. You can only blame yourself for not telling me anything. But I believe he isn't a spy."

"Cut the crap. It never hurts to be cautious."

Hong Tan had a solemn expression. Communicators were unsafe, so he directly left the research center and visited Liu Wenyan personally.

A super genius with incredible luck had joined the declining multiple character faction. He had no choice but to be careful about it. And if the kid was really a spy, it was probably already too late for him to do anything about it.

His silly student had told the kid everything, including the disassembly method and character fusion theory...

All those were supposed to be top secrets. But Su Yu already knew all their secrets. Hong Tan sighed. That student of his was too trusting.

...

Eighteenth Secondary School. Rear mountain.

"Ruin inheritance?"

"That's my guess." Liu Wenyan smiled, "Don't worry too much. If he's really a spy planted by our enemy, your senior brother won't be so stupid to remain fooled for so many years. Also, if he is really a spy, that person would have known everything he wants to know. And he would have killed all of us already by now."

"So he's fine, Senior Brother?"

Liu Wenyan nodded, "Most likely. My only worry is the ruin. I'm only worried about the very unlikely possibility that he had been possessed by some old monster in the ruin."

"You're referring to a willpower soul?"

"Exactly."

Liu Wenyan nodded, "But something like that is very rare. Most of these willpower souls have unclear minds. After all, these ruins have been around for too many years. Any soul left from back then would no longer be in a good condition. I doubt something like that has happened to Su Yu. He must have accidentally stumbled upon some recordings of the past in a ruin."

"Back then, he mentioned that he kept dreaming about being killed by monsters. I suspect if there is really a ruin in Nanyuan, then this ruin must be something related to research in the past. The ruin must have been used for something related to beast taming. A lot of beasts must have been reared there a long time ago."

Su Yu had entered the secondary school at 13. And Liu Wenyan had been teaching him since then. At 13, Su Yu was most certainly not as crafty as he currently was. Thus, when he encountered Liu Wenyan, someone who he viewed as a knowledgeable sage, he inquired about his dreams.

In fact, Liu Wenyan was the one who had suggested that Su Yu start learning about the myriad races and their languages. That would make it easier for him to recognize the beasts killing him in his dreams. Thus, Liu Wenyan actually knew Su Yu quite well. If Su Yu had really been possessed by a soul from the past, he wouldn't be stupid enough to expose himself so easily.

"I see."

Hong Tan exhaled and said, "As long as he's not a spy, it's fine. By the way, Su Yu also asked me if Liu Hong is a spy I sent to the single character faction. Is that your spy?"

"Who?"

"Liu Hong. A genius teaching assistant in the academy from the single character faction. He's Old Zhao's student. Previously, he studied under Zhang Ruoling in the Eighteenth Secondary School."

"Ruoling's student?"

Liu Wenyan thought about it and shook his head, "No. That's not true. Ruoling would have informed me about it if he had really accepted a disciple."

"Then this person is a cheat."

Hong Tan found himself somewhat speechless. "These days, all sorts of people roam the academy. A genius from the single character faction like him had actually lowered himself to lie to a student, telling the student that he was my spy for us in the single character faction? The galls of him!"

Liu Wenyan smiled, "Since he had the galls to make such a claim, just go along with it. Liu Hong...I remember this name. I think Bai Feng told me about him before. He is a genius as well. Old Zhao's student...Old Zhao..."

At the mention of Elder Zhao, Liu Wenyan shook his head, "This Old Zhao is an old man from Teacher's generation. We didn't have a good relationship with him back then, but we weren't hostile either. How has your relationship with him been these years?"

"Not too bad. We basically minded our own business. That old man is fully focused on the Sunmoon Realm. For a period of time, he even had more influence than Zhou Mingren. But he never cared about status or power. What a pity. The Sunmoon Realm is not easy to reach. I'm afraid...he will reach the end of his lifespan soon."

"His lifespan isn't supposed to be this short, right?" Liu Wenyan frowned.

Hong Tan sighed, "After several failed attempts at entering the Sunmoon, he lost some lifespan from the backlash. If he had taken it slow, he would still have some time to keep trying."

"What a pity." Liu Wenyan shook his head, "This is a struggle between the young. Let them experience it lest they grow up sheltered. Just let Su Yu deal with Liu Hong himself."

"I understand." Hong Tan looked at Liu Wenyan and asked, "Senior Brother, any other instructions?"

"Instruction my ass." Liu Wenyan laughed, "Enter seclusion and reach the Sunmoon Realm as soon as possible. Don't step out of the academy again before reaching the Sunmoon Realm. By the way, is the repelling force of your characters strong? It has been quite a while since a human has last reached the Sunmoon Realm..."

Back then, people at the level of Zhou Mingren and Jin Yuhui should already be in the Sunmoon Realm. That also applied to Elder Zhao, who was currently deep in seclusion. Alas, all of them had yet to break through successfully.

Otherwise, Great Xia alone would be able to produce between three to five additional Sunmoons. Currently, the entire Human Realm had around seventy to eighty cultural researchers with the potential to step into the Sunmoon Realm. But all of them were stuck.

In fact, Director Ji was the only person who had stepped into the Sunmoon Realm in recent years. As for General Zhao, he was a warrior. Meanwhile, Administrator Hu was an old Sunmoon. He wouldn't have been appointed the administrator otherwise.

And there was also Wan Tiansheng. It was quite likely that he was already a Sunmoon more than 50 years ago. Liu Wenyan couldn't even be bothered to say anything about that scheming principal anymore.

Marquis Xia was also a recently advanced Sunmoon, but he had advanced through physical cultivation. Liu Wenyan was unsure about the level of Marquis Xia's willpower cultivation.

Chapter 415: Su Yu Meets Xiao'er (3)

"The repelling force is very strong."

Hong Tan nodded, "Fortunately, you have a character technique. Your characters have been forcefully fused to some extent. Even with the repelling force, you can still suppress it. The single character faction members will have an even harder time entering the Sunmoon Realm. How confident are you in your breakthrough?"

"I'm quite confident. But I doubt I can go further and step into the Invincible Realm. Then again, it's still too early to talk about that."

"We'll see in the future."

Liu Wenyan nodded. Yeah, it was still too early to talk about that.

"For now, help me reorganize my characters. Take Bai Feng along with you as well. After we leave, you can enter seclusion and focus on your advancement."

"Alright." Hong Tan nodded and switched to voice transmission, "Senior Brother, would that fellow that the chance to make a move against you at the Allheaven Battlefield?"

"I doubt so. There are too many Invincibles there."

"Senior Brother, don't take things for granted. Don't forget what happened to Big Brother Liu."

Hong Tan had a solemn expression. The Liu Family's fate was the prime example. Back then, they had decided to base their family on the Allheaven Battlefield. But they ultimately ended up getting wiped out. And that had happened in an area that was supposedly under the watch of Invincibles.

Liu Wenyan shut his eyes.

After a short silence, he opened his eyes again and said, "I understand. I won't be careless. I am not my big brother. A lot more eyes are on me. Not even Invincibles can keep paying attention to the entire Allheaven Battlefield, but the Vanguard Regiment has always been the place to receive the most attention from the Invincibles. And I will be at the very center of all that attention. It is actually safer for me to be there."

"That's true. But..." Hong Tan was still worried, "The casualty rate of the Vanguard Regiment is too high. Most of them are criminals sent there to be used as cannon fodder. Senior Brother, in your current condition...and also Bai Feng's condition...sigh."

This was giving him a headache.

Liu Wenyan smiled, "Don't worry. I will be entering the Mountainsea Unit while Bai Feng will be entering the Skysoar Unit."

"Mountainsea Unit?" Hong Tan's expression changed as he exclaimed in alarm, "How can they send you to the Mountainsea Unit?"

"Why else? I unleashed the strength of a Sunmoon to kill a ninth-stage Mountainsea. I naturally have to be treated like a Mountainsea. Are they supposed to treat me like a Skysoar? But since Bai Feng is a proper Skysoar, they won't send him to the Cloudbreach Unit."

"But still...Senior Brother, how about this? Let me go with you..."

"There is no need for that." Liu Wenyan said, "Just stay here. The Great Xia City is still a safe place. And the academy is even safer. I won't be bringing anyone with me. My uncle is still alive. He will be going with me."

"Uncle Liu is still alive?"

Hong Tan was astonished.

Liu Wenyan nodded, "Back then, he was seriously injured and nearly died. But I managed to get someone to help him. This time, he will go with me. He might have fallen from the Sunmoon Realm to the eighth-stage Mountainsea Realm, but he is good enough to protect me."

"Uncle Liu...dropped in rank?"

"Yeah. But I'm already happy to see him alive. It's a good thing for him to stay with me as well. With all the attention on me, it will be harder for people to make a move on him."

Liu Wenyan smiled, "Besides, it is better to die fighting on the battlefield than die to the ambush of a so-called ally."

"Senior Brother, I..." Hong Tan clenched his teeth, "If I can reach the Invincible Realm, I won't spare those bastards!"

"Talk after you reach the Sunmoon Realm." Liu Wenyan said, "Since I've come out of hiding, all the attention will be on me. Things will be relatively safe for you. I will try to drag this out as much as I can. You guys need to grow as fast as possible. Yunji and the others can't be relied on yet. They have yet to fully assimilate their characters. Watch over them as well. Help them work on their characters too."

"How about the graves of Ruoling and the others?"

"It's fine. The Xia Family is still around. Desecrating the dead? Previously, nobody knew their true intention. But now that this matter has spread far and wide, the Xia Family won't turn a blind eye."

He paused shortly before adding, "Furthermore, how sure are you that the characters are still in their graves?"

"Hmm?"

Liu Wenyan smiled, "Don't ask. It's not a bad idea to keep this secret. The multiple character faction will not die off that easily. Although most of our old brothers are already dead, that doesn't mean that their legacy has been severed. They have merely been keeping their successors hidden. I have a list of names in my brain. If I die, the list will die with me. They can keep their secret identities for the rest of their lives."

"Senior Brother, their legacies survived?"

At first, Hong Tan was overjoyed. But soon, grief welled within him. Since when did the successors of the multiple character faction started needing to hide their identities? If his teacher came back to live, he would probably get angered right back to death.

"Don't act like a child." Liu Wenyan stood up and gave Hong Tan a kick. The smile on his face vanished, "Of course their legacies have not been severed. Everyone has been struggling hard during the past 50 years. But not all of us are dead. That in itself is a form of victory."

"It's not like nobody from the Knowledge Seeking Realm and War Shrine is supportive toward us. They have merely been keeping silent to avoid a fallout with Great Zhou King."

Liu Wenyan said, "I don't care what Great Zhou King wants. If he's not the culprit, then it doesn't matter. But if he is the culprit, a day will come when we get our revenge."

"Sigh." Hong Tan said, "Then I won't say anything else. I'll take Su Yu to get the Sky Sundering Saber from Fatty Xia. I wonder if Fatty Xia would agree..."

"He will." Liu Wenyan smiled, "He will only ask for some money. Just pay him. This is a bad habit of his. Even if he is willing to give it to you, he must get something in return or he won't be able to sleep well at night."

"I don't have any money."

Liu Wenyan rolled his eyes. What a broke old man.

"Ask for money from Wu Yuehua..."

"I already owe her a lot of money."

"You..." Liu Wenyan was starting to get a headache. "Look for Hu Ping and Zhao Mingyue. Both Administrator Hu and General Zhao are rich. Just borrow as much money as you can. Worry about paying back after you have the money to do so."

"Fine." Hong Tan sighed, "Good thing my sister-in-laws are around. Otherwise, we would probably all starve to death."

"Piss off."

Liu Wenyan scolded unhappily. This fellow was truly a piece of trash. Just what had he been doing for the past decades? He was already on the cusp of reaching the Sunmoon Realm. Why was he still so poor?

Hong Tan had nothing to say. What could he do about it? He was broke. What could he do about it? With how poor he was, it hadn't been easy for him to reach his current cultivation level. All the resources had been earned with his own two hands. There was nobody he could rely on.

He even needed to raise Chen Yong, raise Bai Feng, and keep his research center operational...

He was very pitiful as well! He was often forced to go to the Allheaven Battlefield and hunt some beasts just to feed their broke faction. It was easy for his senior brother to talk, but his senior brother wasn't the actual person shouldering all those responsibilities.

If he had a few intimate female friends of his own as well, he would have started living his life in comfort long ago. Would he still need to go hunting at the Allheaven Battlefield just for some money?

Liu Wenyan had evidently thought of all that as well. He said, "Things have been hard for you as well. I guess we should be thankful that you are actually still alive. Where have you gotten all your cultivation resources?"

"Me?" Hong Tan laughed dryly, "By selling blood essence."

"Hmm?"

"I'm rearing some Mountainsea beasts in the prison zone. I have been extracting their blood regularly to be sold. In fact, I am the biggest black market blood essence seller in Great Xia. I specialize in selling Mountainsea blood essence. Senior Brother, I have no other choice. I won't be able to survive without selling blood."

"How many beasts are you keeping there?"

"Only three. I think they are probably on the verge of death now. What a waste. It has been a while since I last took any blood from them. Hopefully they can recover."

Liu Wenyan was completely speechless.

Fortunately, both Su Yu and Bai Feng weren't here. Or their jaws would drop from shock.

There were indeed a few rooms at the back of the prison zone. But that area was normally very quiet. Neither Su Yu and Bai Feng could enter that area. And they had never tried. Bai Feng had even guessed that some Mountainsea beasts were locked there. And he was actually right.

The Mountainsea blood seller was the most mysterious of the black market merchants in Great Xia. And that person was actually Hong Tan.

After a while, Liu Wenyan said, "Don't push it too far. Just killing someone is better than endless torture. The same applies to beasts. Just kill them if you want, but you should be careful to not cross the line."

"Alright." Hong Tan gave a hollow laugh and said, "I was forced to do this. We're too poor."

Liu Wenyan waved his hand. He could no longer be bothered to say more.

Hong Tan did not waste any time and left after ending the conversation.

...

Afternoon.

Prefect's manor.

It was grand and imposing.

This was Su Yu's first time here. The manor was located at the core of the capital city. This was a place where one legend after another had been born.

Great Xia, Xia Longwu, Marquis Xia, and the previous prefect, Xia Longwu's father who was a top expert who had perished at the Allheaven Battlefield.

Su Yu had arrived with a heart of admiration.

The Xia Family had an excellent reputation in Great Xia. Apart from Marquis Xia, of course. But even Marquis Xia would generally only act against the rich and powerful families. He had never touched the poor. Perhaps that was because he wouldn't be able to get much from them anyway.

Under Hong Tan's lead, Su Yu entered a large hall. There, they waited for Marquis Xia to arrive.

He had seen Marquis Xia once during the day of the battle. But he had not spoken a word to the marquis. Thus, his impression of Marquis Xia was still greatly influenced by the rumors.

That was a ruthless merchant.

A merchant who would not let any profit go.

An unscrupulous businessman!

He had done a lot of bad things, but thanks to the backing of the Xia Family, he had not suffered much consequences for his actions.

According to the rumors, Marquis Xia would wash his hands and rinse his mouth with source qi liquid, use cultural weapons as carpet, use talismans to warm himself, eat precious pills as snacks, and wipe his ass with willpower texts.

Not one rumor had mentioned that Marquis Xia was a top expert. But Su Yu had personally witnessed how strong the marquis was. This was someone who had fought and prevailed over the character clone of a super expert.

Ohhh! Su Yu also knew that the marquis' name was Xia Xiao'er (little two).

While he was thinking that, a fatty was standing behind him with an unsightly expression. Xia Xiao'er had arrived!

Was this kid aware?

As a mere Mental Tempering Stage student, he would be able to sense the kid's thoughts if it involved him.

Was the kid aware that he was a fifth-stage Sunmoon?

Boom!

During their first official meeting, Su Yu fainted.

He had been knocked unconscious from the back.

The ambusher was a Sunmoon.

Hong Tan rolled his eyes. A Sunmoon had actually ambushed a Mental Tempering Stage kid. He was completely speechless. How could someone be so shameless?

The pitiful Su Yu fainted on the floor. Nobody bothered to help him.

With a dark expression, Marquis Xia scolded, "Did you bring this little bastard here? If it wasn't for you, I would have buried him alive immediately!"

Bastard!

Xia Xiao'er...that name was the greatest shame in his life. If it wasn't for the fact that he wasn't his father's match, he would have given his father a beating as well!

Chapter 416: Teaching (1)

Su Yu had no idea what just happened. He only knew that his head was hurting. In his dazed state, he seemed to hear some people talking. When he was finally able to open his eyes, he saw that he was seated on a chair. He seemed to have fallen asleep.

Fallen asleep?

Impossible!

He was here to meet Marquis Xia. How could he fall asleep for no reason? And his head was hurting badly. Had he been ambushed? But wasn't his grandteacher right beside him?

It was then that he noticed that his grandteacher was chatting with a fatty. That fatty was none other than Marquis Xia.

Marquis Xia turned to look at Su Yu with a smile and asked, "You're finally awake? Children nowadays sure cultivate hard. You worked yourself too much. Your sea of willpower nearly exploded from overworking itself. Don't be so ridiculous in the future."

Su Yu stared blankly. What was the meaning of that? He had suffered from cultivation deviation? But that shouldn't be the case. Although he had cultivated very hard, he didn't feel any discomfort at all.

Despite his suspicion, Su Yu stood up and bowed before saying, "Greetings, Marquis."

"You may rise."

Marquis Xia had a gentle expression as he said, "No need for the formalities. Just be careful when you cultivate in the future. You're lucky that happened when you were in the prefect's manor. What if you were on a battlefield? You would lose your life."

Su Yu looked at Hong Tan blankly.

Had he really suffered from cultivation deviation?

Hong Tan did not meet his grandstudent's gaze. For some reason, he was extremely focused on the chess pieces in front of him. He had been playing chess with Marquis Xia prior to this. As for the fact that Su Yu had been knocked unconscious, whatever. What could he do if the ambusher was a Sunmoon?

Su Yu was suspicious, but since he had no idea what was wrong with himself, he could only say, "Thank you for the reminder, Marquis."

Marquis Xia nodded and said nothing else. Inwardly, he was greatly overjoyed. This was the sweetest form of revenge. After hitting someone, that someone still had to thank you!

After a light cough, Marquis Xia pushed the chess board aside and messed up the chess pieces on it. Not waiting for Hong Tan to say anything, he asked, "You want to learn the Sky Sundering Saber?"

Su Yu nodded and replied, "Yes."

"Do you know how many editions the Sky Sundering Saber has?"

"No."

Marquis Xia explained, "The Xia Family is not stingy with what we have. Over the years, we have taught a decent number of people the Sky Sundering Saber. The stronger Great Xia is, the stronger the Xia Family will be. As long as you're not a traitor or a piece of trash, the Xia Family will be willing to teach you."

"There is no need to explain further our reason for refusing to teach a traitor. As for a piece of trash, we can't have someone untalented learn our Sky Sundering Saber and embarrass us outside, right?"

He smiled and continued speaking, "According to your grandteacher, what you want isn't the regular Sky Sundering Saber. Instead, you want the 144-acupoint version. Am I right?"

"Yes."

"I can see that you've opened a lot of acupoints. So you are probably capable of opening the 144 acupoints of this cultivation method as well. But how many of these acupoints will you be able to fuse in the future?"

"Don't tell me that you will only fuse seven or eight acupoints for your advancement into the Infinite Strength Realm. With a 144-acupoint cultivation method, you need to fuse at least 16 acupoints. That is the maximum number allowed by this cultivation method. Since cultural researchers do not focus on physical cultivation, even their geniuses will mostly stop at 10 acupoints. But even that is enough to make someone a true Infinite Strength cultivator."

"The Xia Family's cultivation method is not something we teach for fun. Thus, there are more people in the war academies who have been taught our cultivation method while in cultural research academies, very few people apart from those from the Xia Family know our cultivation method."

Su Yu solemnly promised, "If you're willing to teach me this cultivation method, I will naturally try to fuse 16 acupoints for my breakthrough."

"Try?" Marquis Xia smiled, "That is not enough. You must do it. If you fail, the Xia Family will take the cultivation method back from you. How do we do that? We will cripple the 144 acupoints you have opened through this cultivation method and make you shift to a different method. Even if you already know the method, you won't dare to openly use it anymore."

Su Yu looked at Hong Tan. His grandteacher smiled and explained, "This is indeed one of the rules of the Xia Family. But you're not required to fuse the maximum number of acupoints. Generally, you will be left alone as long as you can fuse 12 or more acupoints. Am I right, Marquis?"

Marquis Xia replied with a lazy tone, "If you're going to fuse only 12 acupoints, you might as well stay with your War God Art. Opening fewer acupoints will only make acupoint fusion easier. Why bother with the Sky Sundering Saber?"

Su Yu solemnly said, "Marquis, if the Xia Family is willing to teach me this method, I will stop using the Sky Sundering Saber if I fail to fuse 16 acupoints for my breakthrough. What do you think about this?"

Marquis Xia smiled and said, "All geniuses will say the same when they meet me. Over these years, there has been no lack of confident geniuses who are sure they will be successful. They all believe that the Sky Sundering Saber is nothing special. To speak the truth, even in the Xia Family itself, very few people actually cultivate the best version of the Sky Sundering Saber. Since you wish to be taught, I can give you a chance. I need to give you a test."

Test!

Su Yu respectfully said, "I am willing to take the test."

"You sure are confident." Marquis Xia smiled and casually tossed a metallic ball out. The moment the ball landed on the ground, it transformed into a puppet."

"Defeat it and I'll give you the cultivation method. If you fail, go right back where you came from."

At that, the puppet threw a punch at Su Yu.

Su Yu was about to use his willpower when the marquis said, "Use your physical cultivation. The Sky Sundering Saber is a physical cultivation method. There is no need to use your willpower here."

Su Yu hurriedly retreated.

Rumble!

The puppet's punch landed on Su Yu's previous position, creating a violent shockwave of air. Even from further away, Su Yu could feel the immense power behind that punch.

This was an Infinite Strength puppet! Definitely! Not daring to be careless against such an opponent, Su Yu stomped on the ground and appeared behind the puppet with a flicker. He sent his palm out.

But two additional arms appeared from within the puppet and punched at Su Yu. With a boom, Su Yu was pushed several meters back. His right arm had not fully recovered, and with this exchange, it was starting to hurt more and more.

...

"Marquis, this kid is only a Great Strength cultivator. It's fine if you want to use an Infinite Strength puppet, but why use a sixth-stage Infinite Strength puppet? This is too excessive."

Hong Tan was speaking through voice transmission. Marquis Xia rolled his eyes and replied, "Is the Xia Family's cultivation method something you can learn so easily? This is only the start. Even defeating this puppet will only qualify him for a high-tier heaven-grade version. The top-tier version will require him to defeat a seventh-stage Infinite Strength puppet."

"You're being unreasonable." Hong Tan helplessly said, "He's only a Great Strength student."

"If he's not monstrous enough, he should forget about our Sky Sundering Saber. Even if I agree to teach him, my old man won't."

While the two were talking, Su Yu had already exchanged dozens of moves with the puppet. The puppet's body was too hard. Su Yu felt really helpless. Not only was this puppet strong, but it was also made of unknown materials that gave it an incredibly hard body.

He was able to land a few strikes on the puppet, but all his attacks had basically bounced off. And attacks targeting acupoints were also useless against this puppet.

Su Yu activated his eye acupoints and stared at the puppet closely. After a while, he started retreating, moving so fast that he was leaving a string of afterimages in his wake. He stopped facing the puppet head on and started moving in circles around it instead.

"This thing is definitely being powered by some energy source. I only need to exhaust that energy source."

This was Su Yu's plan. He was still a ninth-stage Great Strength cultivator, so he wouldn't be able to deal with an opponent this sturdy even with the large number of acupoints he had opened.

Drag it on! He was going to drag this out. He had 186 opened acupoints, granting him a large supply of source qi. He would use this advantage to tire this puppet to death.

...

"He's quite fast. What heaven-grade technique has he cultivated?" Marquis Xia nodded as he praised.

Hong Tan answered with a smile, "Time."

"Oh, that old man's technique?" Marquis Xia laughed, "With that fellow's inheritance, this kid will probably have a lot of trouble with the silkwrym race when he finally enters the Allheaven Battlefield."

"So what? We're not scared of them." Hong Tan indifferently said, "Even the Silkwrym King no longer dares to show up anymore. There is nothing to fear about them."

"Silk Destroying King...I don't know what to say about him."

Marquis Xia shook his head. Invincibles would very rarely hold a grudge to such an extent. He had suffered one loss at the hands of the Silkwrym King and he had spent the next hundred years taking his revenge on the Silkwrym King. The silkwrym race was truly unlucky to have provoked someone like him.

The two chatted as they watched the fight. After about half an hour, Su Yu was already breathing heavily. He was still running circles around the puppet. With a smile, the marquis suddenly flicked his finger, granting the puppet a boost in speed and strength.

Seventh-stage Infinite Strength puppet!

Su Yu was busy breathing when he suddenly felt something moving rapidly toward the back of his head. He hurriedly utilized the Time technique and moved aside.

Marquis Xia's calm voice rang out, "You won't be able to obtain victory by dragging this out. This puppet's energy source can last three hours. Can you last that long?"

Su Yu was already so tired after half an hour. Would he be able to last three hours?

"You only stand a chance if you fight it head on."

Su Yu said nothing. He continued running circles around the puppet. What a joke. Defeating this puppet head on? This puppet's body was almost indestructible. Not even his Crushing Mountainsea move could do much to it. What was he supposed to do?

That was even more true now that the puppet had received a boost of power from the marquis. Fighting it head on was impossible. He could only drag this out.

Three hours...

After making a decision, Su Yu continued running from the puppet. With his Time technique, his legs turned blurry as he moved at a rapid speed. His source qi slowly drained. His rate of source qi recovery was much slower than the rate at which he was using it now.

While using the Time technique acupoints to escape, he also constantly used his open opened acupoints to supply the Time technique acupoints with source qi. All 186 of his acupoints worked hard, providing him with a source of pure source qi. It was only during moments like this that one could see Su Yu's strong foundations.

Even Marquis Xia nodded at what he saw. This was indeed a good seedling. Pure source qi and high number of opened acupoints. This kid was eligible to cultivate their Sky Sundering Saber. But ultimately, it would still depend on how this kid would do in the test.

Right at that moment, Su Yu suddenly moved behind Hong Tan. There, he took the chance to recover his source qi. Marquis Xia's eyes flickered as the puppet moved around Hong Tan to attack Su Yu.

As a response, Su Yu moved behind Marquis Xia instead. The marquis laughed and flew into the air instead. Su Yu said nothing and ran straight out of the hall instead. Outside, a team of Martial Dragon Guards noticed the rampaging puppet and hurriedly stopped it.

Su Yu seized the opportunity to recover even more of his source qi.

Marquis Xia laughed again as he transmitted his voice to the guards, "Return to your positions. Let him deal with the puppet."

At that command, all the Martial Dragon Guards pulled back.

Su Yu wasted no time and started moving again. With that, a game of catch inside the prefect's manor began. The garden, the main hall, the bedrooms, the Martial Dragon Guards barracks...

Su Yu used everything he could to obstruct the puppet and give himself more chance to recover his source qi. He was going to keep dragging this out.

...

Inside the hall.

Marquis Xia shook his head, "What a cunning kid. He is completely unlike the people from the Xia Family. Someone like him might not be able to achieve much with the Sky Sundering Saber. Everyone in the Xia Family possesses unrivaled bravery. Even against an opponent we can't defeat, we will fight unyieldingly until the very end!"

Hong Tan glanced at Marquis Xia, seemingly asking if the marquis was sure about that.

Marquis Xia smiled and said, "Why are you looking at me like that? Back then, I was also a capable combatant. Of course, nowadays, I am a friendly businessman. Let's wait and see. If he can really drag this out until the puppet runs out of energy, I'll consider it his win."

The game of catch continued in the massive prefect's manor. Su Yu had 186 acupoints supplying him with source qi. And he had a technique that granted him an impressive movement speed.

As long as the puppet was delayed for even a tiny bit, he would be able to recover slightly. With the high density of source qi in the manor, his recovery was actually quite fast.

Time passed. One hour. Two hours...

Three hours later.

Su Yu was breathing heavily; his entire body was drenched with sweat. His white robe had long turned into a black robe. Dragging a puppet behind him, he slowly returned to the hall.

"Marquis, I won."

Beads of sweat were dripping down his body.

Marquis Xia smiled and said, "If this is an actual living being instead of a puppet, do you think you'll be able to tire them out like this?"

Su Yu seriously replied, "If this is a living being, I won't be restricting myself from using my willpower. In any case, any living being would have given up on chasing me long ago."

"Have you ever considered fighting it head on?"

"It's not worth the effort."

"Hmm?"

Su Yu explained, "This is only a puppet. You only told me to win, not put my life on the line. If I make the stupid choice of fighting this puppet until the end and heavily injure myself, I'll need to spend a lot of time recuperating even if I do manage to win. I'm better off wasting a few hours here to tire it out."

Marquis Xia laughed, "Hahaha. That is a reasonable answer. As long as you can stay alive, you will have countless possibilities waiting for you in the future. You are right. What an interesting kid! You're a lot more fun than those brutes."

Before Su Yu could even feel any joy from the praise, Marquis Xia's face fell as he said, "However, the Xia Family's Sky Sundering Saber only suits brutes."

"..."

Su Yu was completely speechless. After an awkward cough, he said, "Actually, I am quite a barbaric person as well."

"Oh?"

"Yeah. I can be very scary when I decide to throw caution to the wind."

"How scary can you get?"

"About that...Teacher Xia Yuwen has a student with 144 acupoints. He cultivates a top-tier heaven-grade cultivation method. And I had defeated him. I reckon he's still unconscious even now."

"Something like that happened?"

Marquis Xia's interest was piqued. A jade talisman appeared in his hand. He started fiddling with it, seemingly in search of some information. After a short while, he looked at Su Yu and laughed.

"You're right. You can be quite barbaric."

"However..." Marquis Xia's face fell again. "Xia Yuwen is a member of the Xia Family. Do you know that? The Xia Family is the master of Great Xia. How dare you raise your hands against your master?"

Su Yu showed no fear. With a simple and honest face, "Yes. The Xia Family is the master. And only the Xia Family has my loyalty. But I only acknowledge Brother Huyou from the Xia Family. We are akin to brothers. Previously, Brother Huyou told me that his dad is my dad. His grandpa is my grandpa..."

Marquis Xia looked at Su Yu silently. This was the first time he had ever encountered a kid who dared to talk this way to him. More importantly, the kid sounded fully serious when he made the ridiculous statement.

Marquis Xia smiled and remarked, "You're quite smart as well. But there is no need to play these tricks on me. It's obvious you already know Huyou's identity. That's not a big deal. But the struggle for the position of prefect is not something outsiders can participate in. Do you understand? This is an internal matter of the Xia Family."

"I understand." Su Yu nodded and said, "I don't have the ability to get involved, anyway. You misunderstood me, Marquis."

Marquis Xia gave Su Yu a deep look. Then, the grave expression on his face vanished, replaced by a smile as he said, "I was kidding. Don't be afraid, kid. We are all people of Great Xia. There are no masters in Great Xia. We of the Xia Family are all kind. We never abuse our power to suppress others. Xia Yuwen's student can only blame his own incompetence for his defeat after challenging you."

Su Yu smiled and said nothing. Inwardly, he was cursing.

Marquis Xia had an odd look on his face. He smirked and asked, "Su Yu, do you know how a Sunmoon Realm differs from all the cultivation realms below it?"

"Please bestow upon me your wisdom, Marquis."

"There is no need to be so ceremonious about this. Simply put, a Sunmoon will develop a crisis sense. For example, if there is a weakling thinking about you with malice, slandering and scolding you in his head, you will be able to sense it if you're a Sunmoon."

Su Yu's face instantly changed.

Holy shit!

Why had nobody told him that before?

Su Yu looked at Hong Tan. But his grandteacher merely ignored him and stared at the ceiling. What was the point of talking about all that with the kid's cultivation level? Also, was the kid really unaware of that?

Yeah, that was probably the case. Or the kid wouldn't have been thinking all those thoughts in the presence of a Sunnmon and got himself knocked unconscious. The kid had probably done the same yet again.

Marquis Xia had a wide smile on his face as he said, "Su Yu, what do you think about this ability? Isn't it a fun ability to have?"

Su Yu's face turned white.

Holy shit!

He finally realized why he had fallen unconscious earlier. He also knew why this fatty-cough, cough, this wise, brilliant, handsome, and majestic Marquis Xia had been somewhat unfriendly toward him. Marquis Xia was wise, handsome, mighty, bold, formidable, and powerful!

Chapter 417: Teaching (2)

Su Yu's willpower churned as he produced praise after praise toward Marquis Xia in his mind. All the praise came from deep inside him. Marquis Xia looked at the kid and merely maintained a faint smile without saying anything.

After a while, he finally spoke, "Hide your disgusting thoughts. I can teach you the cultivation method, but cultivation methods are never things to be taught lightly. Defeating the puppet only gives you the qualification to learn it. But if you want to leave with the cultivation method, tell me. What can you give for it?"

Su Yu cautiously said, "Marquis, I'm only a student..."

"That's fine. You can sell your body. For example, you can serve in the army for 20 years after your graduation."

"Umm...Marquis..." Su Yu softly said, "I don't even know if I can live that long. What if I can't? That would be a loss for you! In that case, you might have to protect me for 20 years to not make a loss. Is this worth it?"

"..."

Marquis Xia looked at Su Yu silently. He had never heard of such an argument before. This kid was truly a genius in sophistry.

Suddenly, he recalled something. This was the same kid who had scammed a large amount of money from the single character faction. This kid was definitely a lot more treacherous than he let on!

"Tell me, then. What can you give?"

"If you can teach me this cultivation method, my grandteacher will teach Brother Huyou a cultivation method as well."

"Cultivation method?"

"Yeah." Su Yu seriously said, "Before this, my grandteacher already agreed that we can exchange cultivation methods. My grandteacher had spent 50 years creating the Thirty-six Souls - Heaven Shaking Sutra. It is a foundation cultural art with 36 apertures. I believe it is valuable enough to be traded for the Sky Sundering Saber."

Marquis Xia frowned and looked at Hong Tan.

Hong Tan continued looking at the ceiling. But when he noticed that Marquis Xia was still staring at him after a long while, he smiled and said, "So is that agreeable? Naturally, only Xia Huyou can be taught. It's the same case as your Xia Family's Sky Sundering Saber where those taught by you can't teach it to anyone else. I'll give Xia Huyou the cultivation manual once you give Su Yu the Sky Sundering Saber's manual."

"Where did you get it?"

"I created it."

Marquis Xia snorted coldly and said, "Are you trying to lie in front of me? If you are really capable of creating something like this, you won't be Hong Tan anymore."

"What do you mean?"

"Hong Tan is not someone with such ability. Which part of my statement are you not understanding?"

"..."

Hong Tan started cursing inwardly.

Marquis Xia's face fell instantly.

Hong Tan was getting tired so he said, "Just tell me if you agree to this trade or not. If not, piss off."

Marquis Xia ignored Hong Tan and asked Su Yu, "Is this the same cultural art you talked about the other day? I noticed that Huyou seemed to have gotten a new cultivation manual after that. The so-called Xia Family's cultural art you mentioned was actually this Heaven Shaking Sutra, right?"

"Yes." Su Yu smiled, "You're right."

"What a cunning kid. That way, you made the Xia Family your scapegoat. And now, you're even trying to trade the cultural art for our cultivation method? Since the manual has already been given to Huyou, why should I give you anything?"

Su Yu smiled and answered, "Marquis, Brother Huyou was only given the instructions for 35 apertures."

"It won't be that hard for us to deduce the location of the final aperture with those 35 apertures we already know about."

Marquis Xia was still calm. Could something like this stump him?

Su Yu nodded and said, "The Xia Family is naturally capable of that. But an agreement was already made between me and him. The art will only be taught to him and no one else. You will violate the agreement by looking at the manual. In that case, the Xia Family's Sky Sundering Saber will probably start being spread everywhere as well. After all, everyone is following the Xia Family's rules. Since the Xia Family is not following their own rules, nobody will bother. Marquis, this is not a loss a single cultural art can compensate for.

"The Xia Family is the soul of Great Xia. And those below will generally follow the example of those above them. The drop in morality in Great Xia will cause you far greater losses than the value of a single cultural art. Don't you think I'm right, Marquis?"

Marquis Xia smiled, "So is this a checkmate on me? Interesting. Over the years, nobody has managed to make a profit at my expense. Are you trying to be the first? Am I supposed to give you the manual without taking a single cent from you?"

"Soul Devouring Art!"

Su Yu did not waste any time. He made his offer directly, "On top of the cultural art, you'll be getting the Soul Devouring Art as well. But in return, I want a willpower text of the Sky Sundering Saber. This includes the supplementary martial technique of this cultivation method. The Soul Devouring Art might

be far lower in grade as a top-tier yellow-grade cultivation method, but it is a uniquely useful method. You should understand this as well."

Marquis Xia stared at Su Yu for a long time. Finally, he smiled.

This was quite a daring young man.

One cultural art and one Soul Devouring Art for a willpower text of the Sky Sundering Saber and the supplementary technique. Which was more valuable? The value would honestly vary depending on who the recipient was.

The top-tier heaven-grade Sky Sundering Saber was not a common cultivation method. It was the unique method of Great Xia King. And Great Xia King was a top existence even among Invincibles.

"Sure!"

Marquis Xia agreed, "Only by fusing 16 acupoints will you be able to truly unleash the might of the Sky Sundering Saber. Among the younger generation of our family like Xia Huyou, Xia Yuwen, and Xia Chan, Xia Yuwen has only fused 14 acupoints for his breakthrough into the Infinite Strength Realm. Nobody from the younger generation has managed to fuse 16 acupoints yet. If you can really do so, I can give you a fortuitous encounter."

"Fortuitous encounter?"

"Yes. Do you know Xia Longwu? He is someone on the cusp of reaching the Invincible Realm. If you can reach the Infinite Strength Realm with 16 fused acupoints before his advancement, you will be allowed to observe his breakthrough."

Su Yu was rendered speechless. Hell fucking no. He was scared of death. Generally, people would enter the Allheaven Battlefield for their advancement into the Invincible Realm. And that person might even need to fight other Invincibles during the breakthrough. Any random stray attack from these experts would be enough to erase Su Yu from existence.

Marquis Xia said, "Observing his advancement into the Invincible Realm will greatly benefit you. At that time, all cultivators of Sky Sundering Saber will be affected. If you're lucky, you might even be able to comprehend some of the mysteries behind the Invincible Realm. Isn't this benefit big enough?"

Su Yu looked at Hong Tan. His grandteacher frowned slightly before saying, "We'll talk about this when the time comes."

Su Yu was still too weak. If Su Yu was a Sunmoon, then he would receive an unimaginably big benefit. That would truly be a highly fortuitous encounter. He didn't know what this fatty was thinking when making this offer. It was getting harder and harder to see through this person.

Marquis Xia said nothing else. He smiled and took out two manuals before saying, "One of these is the cultivation method and the other is the martial technique. The cultivation method teaches you how to unleash the power of your acupoints. The martial technique will teach you how to utilize that power, helping you adapt to your increase in strength."

After tossing the two manuals over, Marquis Xia said, "Don't bring shame to the Sky Sundering Saber. Otherwise, my old man will personally take it back from you. In the entire Human Realm, almost no warrior is a match for those from the Xia Family in the same cultivation level."

Almost. In that case, there were still some people out there who were stronger than them. Understanding dawned on Su Yu. That was understandable. After all, Great Xia King wasn't the strongest human around.

Nevertheless, he was still slightly excited. This was a top-tier heaven-grade cultivation method. This was the strongest cultivation method he had. It was even stronger than the Body Strengthening Art. And the supplementary martial technique would probably not be any weaker than the Time technique.

Marquis Xia was starting to get tired of this. He yawned and said, "This is it. Just remember to pass the Soul Devouring Art to Huyou later. Also, you only need to teach Huyou your Heaven Shaking Sutra. We won't steal it from you. Similarly, you are not allowed to teach anyone else the Sky Sundering Saber."

"I understand."

Su Yu gave the marquis a bow.

Hong Tan was happy to see this happen. Everything would be fine as long as they didn't need to pay. Fortunately, Su Yu had something valuable enough to trade for it. Getting this cultivation method would have been much harder otherwise.

"Then we'll be taking our leave."

Hong Tan wasted no time and left with Su Yu. He didn't want to spend more time here as he could see the odd look in Fatty Xia's eyes when looking at him.

...

After the two left, Marquis Xia yawned lazily and said, "Nephew, are you aware that you're supposed to be in seclusion? Why are you moving around all the time? Do you call this seclusion?"

Xia Longwu stepped out of thin air and said, "Second Uncle, we need to figure out if there is really a ruin at Nanyuan. This Su Yu might be a future Sunmoon. When he grows strong, he will add to the strength of our Great Xia."

"I know that. You don't need to keep reminding me about it." Marquis Xia impatiently said, "Stop ordering me around. If you don't like how I do things, you're free to end your seclusion. Also, spend your own money to heal Xia Yuwen's injuries. I'm too poor for that."

Xia Longwu did not say anything about that.

After thinking about it, Marquis Xia said, "Huyou is still too weak. Should we let him advance through physical cultivation first?"

"There is no rush." Xia Longwu calmly said, "Give him some pressure and let him solve this issue himself. Members of the Xia Family can only rely on themselves if they want to grow truly strong. We have already given him everything we can."

"Sure."

Marquis Xia was indifferent. He started walking away. While walking, he asked, "Zhou Potian is near his breakthrough as well, right? The Zhou Family sure is good at producing geniuses. Both Zhou Potian and Zhou Polong have managed to reach this step. Do you think I should start cultivating my willpower as well?"

"Sure."

Xia Longwu returned the same noncommittal answer before vanishing into thin air.

Marquis Xia merely curled his mouth. Sure his ass.

He shook his head and sighed. They had a lot of powerful experts from the previous generation in Great Xia, but their newer generation was far weaker. He started wondering if he should give up on willpower cultivation and focus on physical cultivation.

This encounter did cause him to remember Su Yu's name, but he still didn't care too much about Su Yu. Great Xia had never lacked geniuses.

And Su Yu could only rely on himself in the path of cultivation. He wouldn't be able to catch more of Marquis Xia's attention before reaching the Mountainsea Realm. A future Sunmoon was not the same as a current Sunmoon.

But he was quite impressed with the kid's business acuity. Perhaps he could recruit the kid into the Xia Trade Company.[fr\(e\)e](#)

Chapter 418: Rumor Mongering (1)

Great Xia Cultural Research Academy.

Filter room.

Su Yu opened the book in front of him. This was the Sky Sundering Saber of the Xia Family, the so-called number one cultivation method in Great Xia.

The moment he opened the book, his vision blurred. A human figure appeared in front of him. That was a familiar figure. It was Xia Longwu! This was a willpower text written by Xia Longwu himself!

"Sky Sundering Saber, the prized cultivation method of the Xia Family. It is split into a cultivation method and a martial technique. But both are actually the same. They are basically different routes leading to the same destination. After all, at the Mountainsea Realm, cultivation methods can be used as martial techniques and vice versa."

Xia Longwu was speaking calmly, showing none of the aggressiveness he usually displayed.

"The Sky Sundering Saber allows you to open 144 acupoints. You can cultivate the entire cultivation method from the beginning. As for the martial technique, you need to train it one level at a time.

"Each move consists of 16 acupoints. There is a total of nine moves you can use to sunder the heavens. The first three moves can be used to behead Skysoars. The next three moves can be used to slaughter Cloudbreaches. And the final three moves can be used to exterminate Mountainseas."

Su Yu merely smiled. It was apparent that the Xia Family wasn't too good at bluffing.

Just look at the Time technique. The creator of that technique was much better at bluffing. He could crush Mountainseas with the first move alone. The second move could suppress Sunmoons and the third move could battle Invincibles.

This was not a real Xia Longwu. It was merely a projection. Thus, it ignored Su Yu and continued its explanation on the Sky Sundering Saber.

It required 144 acupoints. But a lot of them overlapped with the 186 acupoints Su Yu had opened. After reading the entire manual, he found that he only needed to open 84 new acupoints. If he was able to open all these acupoints, he would have 270 opened acupoints in total.

"84 acupoints..."

Su Yu felt a headache incoming. That was a lot of acupoints. If he really decided to open all of them, that would put his total opened acupoints at nearly double the number of those geniuses cultivating top-tier heaven-grade cultivation methods.

And even those freaks would require countless resources and time to open 144 acupoints. But Su Yu actually needed to open double the number of acupoints.

"84 acupoints..."

The more acupoints he opened, the harder it would be to open new acupoints. After a short calculation, Su Yu concluded that he needed at least 500 drops of early-stage Infinite Strength mountainbreak bull blood essence. If he could get late-stage blood essence instead, he would be able to reduce that number.

"That is enough blood essence for me to open all the Body Strengthening Art acupoints."

In that case, he might as well open the Body Strengthening Art acupoints first. After cultivating the Body Strengthening Art, he could use it to increase his absorption speed when opening the acupoints for the Sky Sundering Sword. He would only spend more time doing so.

After all, he mainly used blood essence to increase the speed of acupoint opening as he would be able to absorb source qi at the speed of an Infinite Strength cultivator.

But after opening so many acupoints, his absorption speed was already as fast as an Infinite Strength cultivator's.

Thus, it would be a better choice for him to use his blood essence to open the Body Strengthening Art acupoints. That would grant him a smoother growth, allowing him to stop relying on blood essence that much. After all, enough mountainbreak bulls had been killed to satisfy his cultivation needs.

...

Mental Tempering Garden.

Su Yu wasted no time and tossed a jade talisman to Xia Huyou. He said, "This is for you. You are not allowed to teach it to anyone else. Also, have you purchased the mountainbreak bull blood essence worth 5,000 merit points I told you to purchase previously?"

Xia Huyou ignored the question and checked the talisman. Then, he curled his lips and said, "This is a trade. Why are you making it sound like a gift for me?"

Curiosity covered his face as he asked, "Are you sure you're going to buy so much blood essence?"

"What stupid question is that? I need blood essence to cultivate your family's Sky Sundering Saber or it would be too slow."

Xia Huyou exclaimed, "Have you gone mad? Why are you still opening more acupoints? You might as well enter the Infinite Strength Realm or even the Mountainsea Realm earlier. At that time, you can fuse all your acupoints into one. A heaven-grade cultivation method no longer make much difference at that level."

"Do you think I'm dumb?" Su Yu rolled his eyes and said, "With a good cultivation method, you might be able to fuse 144 acupoints at the Mountainsea Realm. But with only the War God Art, you will only be able to fuse 108 acupoints. Fusion will be much harder with a weaker cultivation method. Are you trying to fool be because you're afraid of being overtaken by me?"

"..."

Xia Huyou was speechless. This fellow was twisting his intentions into something completely different. Whatever. If this fellow didn't want his advice, so be it.

"The single character faction's tournament will start soon. Are you giving it a try?"

"When is it starting?"

"On the 20th. You might not be aware of this, but a lot of seniors from the Elderly District are going to be joining for the five slots."

Xia Huyou had a deep look on his face when he said that.

Seniors?

How old were they?

Very old!

Some of them had been stuck at the peak Mental Tempering Stage for decades and were at the end of their lifespan. The moment they heard about a chance to enter the Willpower Grotto, they got so excited that they were behaving like they were decades younger than their actual ages.

There were also instances where grandparents and grandchildren were going to be joining the tournament together. The grandfather had failed to enter the Skysoar Realm back then. Now, the grandson was near the Skysoar Realm. Thus, they had decided to join the tournament together.

Su Yu was somewhat speechless. He said, "But even if you can enter the grotto, there is no guarantee that you can break through, right?"

"But you will have a much higher chance." Xia Huyou explained, "In the past, the academy had opened the grotto as well. But back then, all the candidates had been decided internally. If it wasn't for the conflict with the multiple character faction, the single character faction would have kept all the slots for themselves as well."

"Has the academy been ignoring their old students?"

But Su Yu himself started shaking his head. It wasn't possible to take care of all the old students. There were simply too many of them around.

Those who were still stuck at an old age were either untalented or too cowardly to fight for opportunities. These were most certainly not the people the academy would pay close attention to.

Xia Huyou said, "In truth, most of these people are not worth pitying. A lot of them are at the peak Mental Tempering Stage. If they really can't materialize their willpower, they could have put some effort into physical training, joining the army, or even the Windcatcher Department. They could have fought for a future. All experts have emerged by fighting for their own opportunities. These people didn't even have the courage to fight for it. Thus, they deserve being stuck for so many years."

It wasn't like the Allheaven Battlefield was filled with only experts. There were plenty of Great Strength and Infinite Strength cultivators there. If the ordinary soldiers could go, why couldn't these cultural researchers go as well?

As Mental Tempering Stage cultivators, they would also be able to progress faster than regular physical cultivators in physical cultivation. And their combat strength would also be higher in comparison. Even with their advantages, they were still too cowardly to go.

Su Yu moved on from the topic and asked, "Cut the crap. Do you have my blood essence? I need to open more acupoints and cultivate the Sky Sundering Saber."

The tournament would be held on the 20th. He still had a week.

"You...are truly a money swallowing monster."

Xia Huyou couldn't help but be impressed by the rate at which Su Yu was spending money.

Su Yu didn't even deign to give a response. He was spending the money he had earned himself. Nobody could say anything about it.

"The mountainbreak bull race sure is pitiful to encounter someone like you..."

Xia Huyou mumbled to himself. Su Yu ignored the fatty. If the fatty really pitied those bulls so much, he could always stop selling their blood essence.

If he was going to do business with their blood essence, he should just shut his mouth.

Since it had been a few days since Su Yu made this order, Xia Huyou had already gathered the blood essence. He also knew that Su Yu would be needing some blood essence. With the Sky Sundering Saber in hand, this fellow was definitely impatient to start cultivating.

...

Su Yu followed Xia Huyou to go get the blood essence.

In total, he had obtained 200 drops of late-stage mountainbreak bull blood essence for 4,000 merit points. Additionally, he had also obtained 20 drops of Infinite Strength five elemental blood essence, bringing the total transaction value to 5,000 merit points.

This fellow would always be so precise when it came to doing business, giving exactly what Su Yu could afford to purchase at any given time. Su Yu couldn't even be bothered to say anything about how calculative the fatty was. He went straight to the Grotto District with his newly purchased blood essence.

...

"The kid is here again."

Source Qi Secret Grotto.

Old Huang sighed. He had just finished packing up. He was going to leave his post today.

"Old Nie, just what's so great about the Discipline Hall? I would rather stay here and keep my freedom. Why do you guys insist on pushing me to that position?"

Old Nie indifferently said, "Sure. Don't go, then."

"Forget it. I'll magnanimously accept this promotion."

Old Huang laughed awkwardly. Not going? What a joke! He had been here for decades! Even Old Nie was already an elder while he wasn't one. Now that his time had come, he naturally had to properly enjoy the treatment of an elder as well.

Su Yu had yet to reach the room. Old Huang took this chance to ask, "When are you entering the Mountainsea Realm?"

"There is no rush." Old Nie spoke through voice transmission, "Have you not discovered anything after studying this source character for so many years?"

"You're saying..."

Old Huang's eyes flickered as he asked, "You're planning to form a character technique?"

"Even if I can't form a character technique, I need to form a complete system and fuse them together."

Old Nie did not hide his discovery. "This source character is actually not a single character. Rather, it is a character formed of multiple characters. You should have discovered the same. From this, we can see that the multiple character faction is still quite valuable. They can't be destroyed. That is also why we decided to replace Old He with you. Keep the single character faction in check. The people above us are still showing an unambiguous attitude. But from what we have discovered, we can't allow the multiple character faction to really be destroyed."

Chapter 419: Rumor Mongering (2)

They had spent too many years guarding these grottos. Everyone knew that the first and third principals were from the multiple character faction. The fourth principal was publicly known as someone from the single character faction.

And the Source Qi Secret Grotto was left behind by the fourth principal.

Because of that, this grotto should be something that had been formed by a single character. But after studying this grotto for decades, he discovered something. The fourth principal's character was actually not a single character. Rather, it was a combination of multiple characters.

That was very surprising.

The fourth principal was truly a member of the single character faction. Although he loved to call himself a blacksmith due to his love for smithing, he wasn't actually that good of a blacksmith. He was stronger as a single character faction member.

This grotto could only prove that the fourth principal had also been studying the fusion of characters back then and had obtained some results from it.

The significance behind that was massive. That proved that the fourth principal had actually started walking the path of multiple characters after reaching the Sunmoon Realm.

Old Huang nodded and said, "I know what to do. But we can't be too partial. We can't allow the multiple character faction to continue being suppressed like this. I will clean up the Discipline Hall. During the year end evaluation, I'll try to weaken the single character faction and protect Chen Yong."

Old Nie nodded and said, "You don't have to be too obvious about it. They aren't so weak that they won't be able to survive without our full support."

After a short chat between the two, Su Yu finally entered the building.

The moment he entered, he saw the luggage beside Old Huang. He asked curiously, "Teacher Huang, are you going on a trip?"

"No." Old Huang calmly said, "I'm having a change of scenery. From now on, Old Nie will be the only one here. I'm taking a job somewhere else."

"Where are you going?"

Su Yu was curious. Would a teacher in charge of watching over a grotto be shifted to a different grotto or something like that? But he had heard that these two had been here for many years.

"Discipline Hall." Old Huang replied, "I don't want to move, but the academy insists on having me run the Discipline Hall. This is so annoying."

"..."

Su Yu stared at the old man blankly.

Discipline Hall! Running the Discipline Hall!

Was this a joke? He had heard from Chen Yong that the hall master of the Discipline Hall would also be appointed as an elder of the academy.

Old Huang was feeling very smug as he seemed to have seen through Su Yu's thoughts. This kid had been too smug previously, delivering them shock after shock. Finally, it was the kid's turn to be shocked!

"Yes. I'm leaving to become an elder." Old Huang had a look of impatience as he said, "I have no interest in this position. It's boring being an elder. And I'm only a ninth-stage Cloudbreach. It's pointless being a non-Mountainsea elder. The Discipline Hall might not be a busy place, but it still has some official duties. This is such a tiring job."

Su Yu blinked his eyes. After a short moment, he turned incomparably passionate as he said, "Senior Hong! No, Elder Huang! You are truly amazing! Even the Discipline Hall can't escape your grasp! By the way, is the Discipline Hall in charge of the end of year evaluations?"

Old Huang calmly said, "Yeah. How troublesome. Why do you ask?"

"No reason. Teacher Huang, you sure are amazing!"

Inwardly, Su Yu was still very shocked.

This guy was just a guard...but he had suddenly turned into an elder?

Holy shit!

Just what was going on?

He was naturally unaware of the deeper workings in the academy. He also didn't know too much about the elders of the Grotto District. In fact, that was the case for the majority of the students. They didn't even know who these elders were.

The only thing everyone knew was that the academy had six non-Mountainsea elders. What a surprise. This old man in front of him was going to become one of them. Discipline Hall...Previously, Xia Yuwen had utilized his status as a discipline master from the Discipline Hall to give him trouble. That was a place with quite a lot of power in the academy.

And the old man in front of him was going to be leading that place. Truly impressive! Old Huang had an indifferent face.

Was the kid shocked? Surprised? He was now an elder!

Of course, the other old man in the room was already an elder a long time ago. Old Huang had merely been ignoring that fact.

Old Huang decided to move on from the topic and asked, "Are you entering the grotto again? You're going to enter the Infinite Strength Realm?"

"No. I'm going to cultivate a new cultivation method."

"New cultivation method?"

Old Huang was slightly surprised.

Suddenly, Su Yu thought of something and said, "It's a heaven-grade cultivation method. But it wasn't written by an Invincible. A peak Sunmoon wrote it. This won't be a problem for the grotto, right?"

The previous time he brought a willpower text into the grotto, there seemed to be an issue. Would it be fine this time?

He was going to enter with a willpower text as well.

"..."

Old Huang was feeling tired. He had only basked in the limelight for a short moment and this kid was starting to say something outrageous again. Were heaven-grade cultivation methods not valuable anymore? Were peak Sunmoons so common these days?

"It should be fine. As long as the willpower text does not produce something like an independent pocket space, there won't be much issues."

"Good. Thank you, Teacher." Su Yu was relieved.

Old Huang curiously asked, "What cultivation method is it? If it's a secret, you don't need to tell me."

"Oh, it's not a secret. It's a pretty common cultivation method, the Sky Sundering Saber."

"..."

Common cultivation method? Really? Fine, fine. That was really quite impressive.

Not just everyone could learn the Xia Family's cultivation method. It would seem like even the Xia Family viewed this kid as someone worth nurturing. That was the only reason the kid could get his hands on their cultivation method.

After a short chat, Su Yu brought up something else, "Teacher, I have a friend from the war academy. He wishes to enter the grotto with Teacher Zhao's token. Is that possible?"

"Old Zhao's token..."

Old Huang gave it a thought and said, "We are only supposed to allow the students of our academy to enter. That serves as a precaution against the infiltrating of the Myriad Race Cult. But if you act as your friend's guarantor and promise to compensate the academy with an Eternal character should any problem arise, there won't be a problem."

"..."

Old Nie shot Old Huang a glance but said nothing.

In truth, even with a token, someone from the war academy wouldn't be able to enter so easily. A deep investigation needed to first be conducted on the visitor's background. And it would be even better if the visitor could get a Mountainsea from the war academy to serve as a guarantor.

But when he thought about it, he decided that it would be fine. Since Old Zhao himself trusted Su Yu enough to give the kid a token, there was no need for them to worry about it too much.

"I understand. Thank you, Teacher."

Su Yu hurriedly thanked Old Huang for the confirmation.

Old Huang couldn't even be bothered to say more. After accepting the entry fee of 100 merit points from Su Yu, he kicked Su Yu into the grotto. Then, he said, "This kid is using Old Zhao's token so freely. This is only a borrowed object. Why is the kid taking it so lightly?"

"He is already qualified to enter the grotto. The only reason he had asked for the token is to help others enter. If even Old Zhao is fine with it, why are you grumbling?"

Old Nie did not seem to mind. He started nagging again, "At the Discipline Hall, take note of the year end evaluation. It's starting soon. Don't do what Old He has been doing. He always love to smooth things over. Don't learn from him. Clean the academy up. It would be better of you can use this year end evaluation to set an example out of someone. The people in the academy has almost forgotten about the existence of the Discipline Hall. Nobody cares about the first evaluation anymore. Everyone acts like it's just a procedure. We'll teach them that they're wrong."

"Yeah, I know."

While talking to each other, the two looked at the grotto entrance curiously. How long would the kid stay inside this time?

The single character faction was going to hold a tournament with several slots up for grabs soon.

The kid was most likely here to learn the Sky Sundering Saber and prepare himself for the tournament.

...

At the same time.

Single character faction's building.

Inside an office.

Zhou Pingsheng calmly speaking to several students, "Although I have promised to take out five slots, I have never promised that the slots will be given to outsiders. Thus, the best case scenario is winning all the slots back ourselves. Even if we can't win all the slots back, we must ensure that those who are hostile to us can't get them."

"I have gathered you here because you are the more talented ones among the young students. But you will probably not be a match for the old students. Even Di Feng might have a hard time against them."

Di Feng disagreed, but he kept his mouth shut.

Some of those old students were even older than his grandfather. Why were they competing against these young students? He felt ashamed on their behalf.

"But that doesn't matter. None of you are weak. If you really end up encountering a strong old student in the tournament, you can always choose to tire them out.

"This time, our main targets will still be Su Yu and those friendly toward him. He Ji, Wu Yuehua, and the other fellows from their side have obtained a slot each as well. They definitely won't be satisfied with just one slot. You will need to prevent them from benefiting from this tournament."

Di Feng nodded and asked, "Teacher, Su Yu has yet to register for the tournament. Is it possible that he's not joining?"

"Maybe."

Zhou Pingsheng was unsure. After thinking about it, he said, "If he does join, make sure he leaves with nothing. If he doesn't join, he won't be able to enter the grotto. By the time you guys are out, the luckier ones might already be in the Skysoar Realm. Even the unlucky ones will be at the peak Mental Tempering Stage. At that time, he will no longer be a treat."

Zhou Pingsheng might be saying that, but he still hoped to see Su Yu join the tournament. That fellow had seriously injured several single character faction geniuses. A lot of strong students were going to be participating in this tournament. Not even the number one student in the top 100, Zhan Hai, could be sure that he would place first in the tournament.

If Su Yu did join, they would be able to rig the matches and make him suffer.

Zhou Pingsheng said, "This time, Hong Tan has obtained a slot as well. That slot will definitely be given to Wu Jia. We can't allow her to enter the top 100. But if she manages to enter this grotto, she will grow stronger. At that time, it might no longer be possible to stop her from ascending to the top 100. With Hong Tan around, she has probably recovered from her willpower injury."

Di Feng couldn't help but to grumble, "How could Grandteacher give them the slots? If Wu Jia manages to grow stronger, it will be much harder to keep her outside the top 100."

This would be very unfavorable for his own teacher.

Originally, with Wu Jia out of the top 100, Zhou Pingsheng had a good chance to become the new head manager. He would then be able to use that as the stepping stone to become the new faction master and an elder. But with what was happening, that wouldn't be so easy anymore.

"Your grandteacher has his reasons."

Zhou Pingsheng was naturally unhappy as well, but there was nothing he could do about it. That was the decision made by his teacher and the other elders.

Deciding to stop talking about his teacher, Zhou Pingsheng said, "After her recovery, Wu Jia has been going out of the books depository frequently. Compared to that cunning Su Yu, Wu Jia is a lot more green. Your grandteacher has personally given your Junior Brother Huang a treatment. He is on the verge of full recovery as well..."

"He's near full recovery?"

Di Feng was surprised to hear that. Could someone recover so fast from such heavy injuries? What kind of a price had his grandteacher pay for that? His grandteacher sure was generous.

Zhou Pingsheng observed his student's reaction but did not remark about it. He continued, "Wu Jia hates your junior brother. After all, he has nearly crippled her during their previous fight. When you have time, take a stroll around the academy with your junior brother. And if you happen to encounter Wu Jia during one of these strolls...you know what to do. It would be the best if you can cripple her before she can even enter the Willpower Grotto."

A fierce glint appeared in his eyes as he added, "Remember to follow the rules. Do this in a way that the multiple character faction won't be able to complain about anything. Your Junior Brother Huang did well previously. If it wasn't for Su Yu, they wouldn't have been able to make a comeback."

He had a good opinion of Huang Qifeng. Even though Huang Qifeng was Zheng Yuming's student instead of his own student, that didn't stop him from appreciating the ability of this student.

Sure, this student was somewhat weak and unlucky, but he was very good at harming his opponent without getting in trouble. If it wasn't for Su Yu's sudden rise, Wu Jia would probably need to give up on entering the top 100 again this year. Not even Hong Tan's return would change anything.

"Is Junior Brother Huang willing to do this?"

Di Feng was unsure. After all, Huang Qifeng had received such a terrible beating from Su Yu not long ago. Would he still dare to show himself?

"As long as we break no rules, there is nothing to fear."

Zhou Pingsheng coldly said, "Are we supposed to just wait as they make a comeback? The moment the multiple character faction regains their glory, with their talent and strength, the at least a third of the academy's resources will be allocated to them. At that time, would you still be able to enjoy all the benefits you're enjoying right now? Right now, you have everything you want. Cultivation methods, cultural weapons, pills, talismans, you don't lack anything."

Zhou Pingsheng snorted after saying that. If the multiple character faction was allowed to rise up again, these students would no longer live such carefree lives.

Their faces turned solemn when they heard his words. Finally, Zhou Pingsheng waved his hand and said, "Leave. Do as I said. Also, I believe you are as good as Su Yu in creating trouble. Since Su Yu can incite the masses and turn them against you, can't you do the same against him and Wu Jia? Are all of you garbage?"

Di Feng nodded and said, "I understand, Teacher. Don't worry. I won't give Wu Jia the chance to enter the Willpower Grotto."

"You may leave."

Chapter 420: Rumor Mongering (3)

Zhou Pingsheng said nothing else and sent the students away. After they left, he started frowning. Just what was his teacher thinking?

A new faction master had yet to be appointed. Due to Xia Yuwen's injuries, his teacher had also started losing interest in taking over the books depository. But the position of the head manager was supposed to be his, not Xia Yuwen's. Why was his teacher losing interest just because of Xia Yuwen's injuries?

Without the position as a head manager, how was he supposed to become an elder? Even if he could become the faction master, he still wouldn't be able to get promoted into an elder.

"Teacher cares more about his own advancement into the Sunmoon Realm, not us..."

Zhou Pingsheng snorted unhappily. Just look at his senior brother, Zheng Yuming. Previously, their teacher had promised to rob a grave and get him a new character. But even now, Zheng Yuming was still bedridden with destroyed characters. How was he supposed to survive the Allheaven Battlefield in his current condition?

He rapped on the desk as he thought. After a while, his eyes flickered. Perhaps...it was time he did something himself. He couldn't rely on his teacher all the time. At the very least, he needed to get the position of head manager for himself.

"I'll get 10 students to block Wu Jia's path into the top 100 and get Su Yu stuck above top 90. That way, he won't be able to drop out of the ranking while Wu Jia would be stuck outside the ranking."

That was the best idea he could think of. Keeping Wu Jia out of the ranking for the rest of the year was still the best option. Otherwise, it would be hard to kick Chen Yong out of his position.

Of course, the premise for that was Wu Jia's inability to defeat the 10 students. But she had already recovered from her injury. And she was by no means a weak student. Unless she suffered from another injury, it would be hard to keep her out of the ranking.

Suddenly, he thought of someone.

Zhou Hao!

That was a truly ruthless individual. He had been badly injured during his fight against Su Yu, but Xia Yuwen was rich enough to help him recover. The recovery of the flesh was easy so Zhou Hao had almost fully recovered.

"Zhou Hao...that kid grew up among beasts. He is a killer of no remorse...It won't be surprising if someone like him kills Wu Jia by accident during a match. As for the repercussions of that...well, that's a problem for Zhou Hao and Xia Yuwen to solve."

But he definitely couldn't get his own hands dirty. He had to avoid being implicated by it.

Liu Hong!

Suddenly, a name appeared in Zhou Pingsheng's mind. That fellow would be the perfect person to carry out this plan on his behalf.

...

Su Yu was still in seclusion.

A rumor started spreading in the academy.

While taking a stroll, Wu Jia heard some students whispering, "I heard Wu Jia wasn't supposed to get a slot for this Willpower Grotto. But the multiple character faction decided to sacrifice Su Yu to give Wu Jia this slot."

"What a pity. Su Yu had fought Zhou Hao, Qiu Yi, and the others for Wu Jia. But he has been abandoned just like that."

"Wasn't Wu Jia the reason he has offended so many people? With his talent, he would have received the multiple character faction's full support if it wasn't for Wu Jia."

"True. But why has the multiple character faction picked Wu Jia instead of Su Yu?"

"She's a woman, so...you know what I mean...hehehe..."

Wu Jia's face turned ashen.

She roared at the students, "What are you talking about!"

When the students saw her, they hurriedly walked off without even saying anything to her. Wu Jia was furious. She wanted to give chase, but she decided against it after some thought. She merely stomped her foot on the ground in anger.

As she walked, she kept hearing different versions of the same rumor. She was infuriated. Furthermore, each version seemed to be even uglier than the previous. Wu Jia held her anger in and decided to return to the books depository. But on her way back, she stumbled upon a few students.

Huang Qifeng.

Di Feng.

A bunch of bastards.

Huang Qifeng's face was pale. He had clearly not fully recovered. When he saw Wu Jia, resentment filled his eyes.

He had nearly fully recovered from his willpower injury, but his characters had also been destroyed. That was not something he could just recover from. He had to form his characters from scratch. That would delay his cultivation by at least a year.

When he saw Wu Jia, he sneered, "Are you going to the books depository again? All students have their own accommodations in the academy. But a certain student sure is lucky. She gets to treat the books depository as her home. A single man and a single woman living together. Tsk tsk. I now understand why the multiple character faction has given you the slot instead of Su Yu."

Beside him, Di Feng smiled and said, "Junior Brother, enough. Su Yu was probably forced to help her anyway. After all, that's his martial aunt..."

"Bastard! What are you talking about!"

Wu Jia raged. She was feeling murderous. These people were slandering the relationship between her and her teacher. These shameless bastards! She wanted to kill them!

Huang Qifeng coughed lightly. His face remained pale while his eyes turned cold as he said, "Why? So we're not allowed to talk anymore? Since when is the multiple character faction so overbearing? Books depository? More like filth depository! If you are not involved in any shameful deed, why are you afraid of mere words? A single man and a single woman are living together every single day. Who knows what you do there? Hehe, I now understand why Su Yu was so ruthless during the fight. He was probably too scared to hold back."

"Bullshit!" Wu Jia grew more and more furious.

Huang Qifeng merely laughed and indifferently said, "Sure. Whatever you say. But all the students know what's happening behind the scenes. Otherwise, it is not logical that instead of Su Yu, you're the one with the slot. Not even Bai Feng could get anything. You are the sole exception. Hahaha!"

Wu Jia said, "You guys were the one who had blacklisted my junior brother!"

"Hadn't he offended our faculty head because of you?" Huang Qifeng said, "Ultimately, you're the reason for this. Wu Jia, why are you pretending to be innocent and pure? If you're already a whore, be open about it."

"Die!"

In her fury, Wu Jia's cultural weapon appeared. She could no longer take this. These people were slandering her, her teacher, and her junior brother.

Huang Qifeng narrowed his eyes and sneered as he took a few steps back. Meanwhile, Di Feng looked eager. He was looking forward to kill her after she made the first move.

In the academy, anyone caught attacking a student outside of a ring could be executed as a cultist. Nobody would be blamed for someone killed like this.

Right that moment, someone passed by and berated them, "What are you doing? Are you fighting illegally in the academy? Are you tired of living? What is wrong with the academy nowadays?"

That helped Wu Jia regain her clarity of mind. She hurriedly looked at the speaker.

Not far away, Zhang Hao was walking with a few other genius students. With a frown, he said, "What a mess. The academy is really accepting all sorts of trash nowadays. What are you looking at?"

With a snort, he walked away. The other students also gave them a look of disdain before leaving. Junior Brother Zhang was right. Because of these people, the academy was in a mess nowadays.

Di Feng frowned. He looked at Zhang Hao and cursed inwardly. Damn that bastard! He ruined their plan!

But he wasn't suspicious of it. Zhang Hao was a freak, the treasure of the Talisman Faculty. He had always been an arrogant student with high standards. It was perfectly normal for him to look down on Di Feng even if Di Feng was stronger currently.

In the Talisman Faculty, even the senior students couldn't help orbiting around this Zhang Hao.

Wu Jia was still furious, but she was finally able to think straight. She knew that if she made a move here, that would be tantamount to suicide. After clenching her teeth, he said, "Just you wait, bastards!"

Huang Qifeng was regretful, but he still sneered and said, "What are we supposed to be waiting for? For you to look for Su Yu? Hehe, is sleeping with your own teacher not enough? You're now setting your eyes on your junior brother as well?"

"Die!"

Once again, Wu Jia lost control of her temper.

Her willpower erupted in anger. Just as Di Feng was about to make a move, a grinning individual not far away said, "Get into a ring before you fight. What's the point of wasting time outside a ring? I can even be your referee. Why don't we have a match to the death?"

Di Feng was infuriated. Who was it this time?

Not far away, a sloppy Zhao Ming could be seen sipping on some beverage while grinning. He said, "Wu Jia, where's your junior brother? Previously, he said that he's going to challenge the ranking after three days. I have been waiting for a few days. Where is he? Tell him to show up soon and get me something to do. I have too much free time nowadays."

After being interrupted twice in a row, Wu Jia finally regained her calm. After giving the two another glare, she ignored Zhao Ming and left with her head lowered. She knew that those bastards were deliberately trying to provoke her into making a move. She was going crazy from anger.

Even if she got into a ring, she wouldn't be Di Feng's match. And she wasn't qualified to challenge him anyway. As for Huang Qifeng, that person would definitely not dare to get in a ring in his current condition.

Both Di Feng and Huang Qifeng were feeling terrible. Zhao Ming!

Damn him!

This fellow was creating trouble again!

Their plan had failed.

Di Feng gestured at Huang Qifeng to be patient. With Wu Jia's temper, she wouldn't be able to stay silent for long. They only needed to keep spreading these rumors. They silently left as well.

After everyone left, Zhao Ming frowned. He looked in Wu Jia's direction. The little girl wasn't too strong, yet her temper was exceptionally fiery. Since the single character faction could do nothing to the other members of the multiple character faction, they were clearly targeting her.

It wasn't like they had any other options. The multiple character faction was filled with someone who could never be seen, someone who was scarily patient, and a crafty fox like Su Yu.

Wu Jia was the only option left for the single character faction.

"Chen Yong..."

Looking at the distant books depository, Zhao Ming muttered to himself. There was nothing he could do about this. He could do something to help if he happened to be around, but he couldn't follow the girl all day long, right?

That girl should learn to control her temper.

If Su Yu was put in the same position, he would probably completely ignore the rumors.

...

At the same time.

Inside the grotto.

One of the jade talismans Su Yu was carrying with him vibrated. He was astonished to find that he could actually receive messages even inside a grotto. He had assumed that all connections with the outside world would be cut. It was evident that this voice transmission talisman was really well made.

After checking the message, an ominous glint filled his eyes. Those people were courting death! Even after receiving such a terrible beating from him, Huang Qifeng still dared to show up and create trouble for them. Was that fellow really not afraid of death?

There was also Di Feng. Did that bastard think that he wouldn't dare to kill anyone?

A match to the death...

Suddenly, Su Yu thought of that. The permission of his teacher would be required to do something like that. If it wasn't for Bai Feng's absence, he would have killed Zhou Hao during their match.

"It seems like the saying is right. When removing weed, you need to remove the roots as well."

Su Yu gnashed his teeth furiously. Those fellows dare to continue creating trouble even after what he did to them. They were really courting death.

His grandteacher said that the single character faction was their shield. But if the so-called shield was courting death, then they should destroy this shield and look for a new shield.

After some thought, Su Yu sent a message to Xia Huyou.

Xia Huyou had not been invited to the Mutual Aid Club, but that fellow had pestered him for a voice transmission talisman after seeing Chen Hao with one. Su Yu did not object and gave him one. And this was the perfect time to make use of that.

The other members of the Mutual Aid Club wouldn't be able to do anything here, but Xia Huyou would definitely be able to drag things out for at least a few days.

"I'll take care of them after leaving the grotto."

Su Yu's eyes flickered as the murderous intent within them dispersed. He was in the middle of opening the Body Strengthening Art acupoints. All in all, he had opened 210 acupoints. He was only a tiny bit away from completing the Body Strengthening Art. After completing it, he would work on the Sky Sundering Saber. He was sure he would need no more than three days to complete his cultivation goal and leave the grotto.

"A proper way to kill...I can either do it in a match to the death or make them attack me outside a ring."

Previously, he had nearly succeeded in making Di Feng attack him outside a ring. Di Feng wasn't exactly a smart person. And he had a bad temper as well. Thinking of all that, Su Yu started drawing up a plan.

"Huang Qifeng...Di Feng...Zhou Pingsheng..."

Name after name crossed his mind. These fellows were truly courting death. For the position of the head manager, they were pulling out all sorts of shameless tricks.

Huang Qifeng's teacher, Zheng Yuming, had been gravely injured. This Huang Qifeng had probably realized that he no longer had a backer and was trying to fawn on Zhou Pingsheng. That was most likely why he was making a move against the multiple character faction again.

"Chen Qi..."

Yet another name appeared in Su Yu's mind. This person would be useful when it comes to information gathering. Su Yu could even try to find out what those fellows cared about most from Chen Qi.

He aimed to finish them off before they could even enter the Willpower Grotto.